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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES





15B

**GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING  
BROOKS**







"Ho! green fields and running brooks,  
Knotted strings and fishing hooks."

—PROEM.

*From a drawing by W. T. Smedley.*

# **GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING BROOKS**

**BY**

**JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY**



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TO MY SISTERS  
**ELVA AND MARY**

344601

*HO ! green fields and running brooks !  
Knotted strings and fishing-hooks  
Of the truant, stealing down  
Weedy back-ways of the town.*

*Where the sunshine overlooks,  
By green fields and running brooks,  
All intruding guests of chance  
With a golden tolerance.*

*Cooing doves, or pensive pair  
Of picnickers, straying there—  
By green fields and running brooks,  
Sylvan shades and mossy nooks !*

*And—O Dreamer of the Days,  
Murmurer of roundelay  
All unsung of words or books,  
Sing green fields and running brooks !*

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## A COUNTRY PATHWAY

I COME upon it suddenly, alone—  
A little pathway winding in the weeds  
That fringe the roadside; and with dreams my own,  
I wander as it leads.

Full wistfully along the slender way,  
Through summer tan of freckled shade and shine,  
I take the path that leads me as it may—  
Its every choice is mine.

A chipmunk, or a sudden-whirring quail,  
Is startled by my step as on I fare—  
A garter-snake across the dusty trail  
Glances and—is not there.

Above the arching jimson-weeds flare twos  
And twos of sallow-yellow butterflies,

## A COUNTRY PATHWAY

Like blooms of lorn primroses blowing loose  
When autumn winds arise.

The trail dips—dwindles—broadens then, and lifts  
Itself astride a cross-road dubiously,  
And, from the fennel marge beyond it, drifts  
Still onward, beckoning me.

And though it needs must lure me mile on mile  
Out of the public highway, still I go,  
My thoughts, far in advance in Indian file,  
Allure me even so.

Why, I am as a long-lost boy that went  
At dusk to bring the cattle to the bars,  
And was not found again, though Heaven lent  
His mother all the stars

With which to seek him through that awful night.  
O years of nights as vain!—Stars never rise  
But well might miss their glitter in the light  
Of tears in mother-eyes!

So—on, with quickened breaths, I follow still—  
My avant-courier must be obeyed!  
Thus am I led, and thus the path, at will,  
Invites me to invade

## A COUNTRY PATHWAY

A meadow's precincts, where my daring guide  
Clammers the steps of an old-fashioned stile,  
And stumbles down again, the other side,  
To gambol there awhile

In pranks of hide-and-seek, as on ahead  
I see it running, while the clover-stalks  
Shake rosy fists at me, as though they said—  
“ You dog our country walks

“ And mutilate us with your walking-stick!—  
We will not suffer tamely what you do,  
And warn you at your peril,—for we'll sic  
Our bumblebees on you!”

But I smile back, in airy nonchalance,—  
The more determined on my wayward quest,  
As some bright memory a moment dawns  
A morning in my breast—

Sending a thrill that hurries me along  
In faulty similes of childish skips,  
Enthused with lithe contortions of a song  
Performing on my lips.

In wild meanderings o'er pasture wealth—  
Erratic wanderings through dead'ning lands

## A COUNTRY PATHWAY

Where sly old brambles, plucking me by stealth,  
Put berries in my hands:

Or the path climbs a boulder—wades a slough—  
Or, rollicking through buttercups and flags,  
Goes gayly dancing o'er a deep bayou  
On old tree-trunks and snags:

Or, at the creek, leads o'er a limpid pool  
Upon a bridge the stream itself has made,  
With some Spring-freshet for the mighty tool  
That its foundation laid.

I pause a moment here to bend and muse,  
With dreamy eyes, on my reflection, where  
A boat-backed bug drifts on a helpless cruise,  
Or wildly oars the air,

As, dimly seen, the pirate of the brook—  
The pike, whose jaunty hulk denotes his speed—  
Swings pivoting about, with wary look  
Of low and cunning greed.

Till, filled with other thought, I turn again  
To where the pathway enters in a realm  
Of lordly woodland, under sovereign reign  
Of towering oak and elm.

## A COUNTRY PATHWAY

A puritanic quiet here reviles  
The almost whispered warble from the hedge,  
And takes a locust's rasping voice and files  
The silence to an edge.

In such a solitude my sombre way  
Strays like a misanthrope within a gloom  
Of his own shadows—till the perfect day  
Bursts into sudden bloom,

And crowns a long, declining stretch of space,  
Where King Corn's armies lie with flags unfurled,  
And where the valley's dint in Nature's face  
Dimples a smiling world.

And lo! through mists that may not be dispelled,  
I see an old farm homestead, as in dreams,  
Where, like a gem in costly setting held,  
The old log cabin gleams.

• • • • •

O darling Pathway! lead me bravely on  
Adown your valley-way, and run before  
Among the roses crowding up the lawn  
And thronging at the door,—

A COUNTRY PATHWAY

And carry up the echo there that shall  
Arouse the drowsy dog, that he may bay  
The household out to greet the prodigal  
That wanders home to-day.

## ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

ON the banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place fer me!—  
Worter slidin' past ye jes as clair as it kin be:—  
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,  
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazin' by;  
Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the trees—  
And I purt'-nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine and  
the breeze!

Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea.—  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mil'd er two from town—  
'Long up where the mill-race comes a-loafin' down,—  
Like to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—  
And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she  
pours:

Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,  
Where the fish is jes so thick you kin see 'em shine

## ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

As they flicker round yer bait, *coaxin'* you to jerk,  
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as *work*!

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight  
Jes to be around there—take it day er night!—  
Watch the snipes and killdees foolin' half the day—  
Er these'-ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever'way!—  
Snake-feeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight;  
And dewfall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at  
night—

Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick below,—  
And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from the  
old b'y-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to  
“Johnson's Hole,”  
And find where he's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-pole:  
Have yer “dog-leg” with ye, and yer pipe and “cut-  
and-dry”—

Pocketful o' corn-bread, and slug er two o' rye. . . .  
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—  
Like the Good Book tells us—“where there're none to  
make afraid!”

Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea.—  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

## A DITTY OF NO TONE—

*Piped to the Spirit of John Keats*

### I

WOULD that my lips might pour out in thy praise  
A fitting melody—an air sublime,—  
A song sun-washed and draped in dreamy haze—  
The floss and velvet of luxurious rhyme:  
A lay wrought of warm languors, and o'er-brimmed  
With balminess, and fragrance of wild flowers  
Such as the droning bee ne'er wearies of—  
Such thoughts as might be hymned  
To thee from this midsummer land of ours  
Through shower and sunshine, blent for very  
love.

### II

Deep silences in woody aisles wherethrough  
Cool paths go loitering, and where the trill  
Of best-remembered birds hath something new  
In cadence for the hearing—lingering still

## A DITTY OF NO TONE

Through all the open day that lies beyond;  
Reaches of pasture-lands, vine-wreathen oaks,  
Majestic still in pathos of decay;—  
The road—the wayside pond  
Wherein the dragon-fly an instant soaks  
His filmy wing-tips ere he flits away.

## III

And I would pluck from out the dank, rich mould,  
Thick-shaded from the sun of noon, the long  
Lithe stalks of barley, topped with ruddy gold,  
And braid them in the meshes of my song;  
And with them I would tangle wheat and rye,  
And wisps of greenest grass the katydid  
E'er crept beneath the blades of, sulkily,  
As harvest-hands went by;  
And weave of all, as wildest fancy bid,  
A crown of mingled song and bloom for thee.

## A WATER-COLOR

Low hidden in among the forest-trees  
An artist's tilted easel, ankle-deep  
In tousled ferns and mosses, and in these  
A fluffy water-swan, half asleep  
Beside a sketch-book and a fallen hat—  
A little wicker flask tossed into that.

A sense of utter carelessness and grace  
Of pure abandon in the slumb'rous scene,—  
As if the June, all hoydenish of face,  
Had romped herself to sleep there on the green,  
And brink and sagging bridge and sliding  
stream  
Were just romantic parcels of her dream.

## THE CYCLONE

So lone I stood, the very trees seemed drawn  
In conference with themselves.—Intense—intense  
Seemed everything;—the summer splendor on  
The sight,—magnificence!

A babe's life might not lighter fail and die  
Than failed the sunlight.—Though the hour was  
noon,  
The palm of midnight might not lighter lie  
Upon the brow of June.

With eyes upraised, I saw the underwings  
Of swallows—gone the instant afterward—  
While from the elms there came strange twitterings,  
Stilled scarce ere they were heard.

The river seemed to shiver; and, far down  
Its darkened length, I saw the sycamores  
Lean inward closer, under the vast frown  
That weighed above the shores.

## THE CYCLONE

Then was a roar, born of some awful burst! . . .

And one lay, shrieking, chattering, in my path—  
Flung—he or I—out of some space accurst  
As of Jehovah's wrath:

Nor barely had he wreaked his latest prayer,  
Ere back the noon flashed o'er the ruin done,  
And, o'er uprooted forests tousled there,  
The birds sang in the sun.

## WHERE-AWAY



O THE Lands of Where-Away!  
Tell us—tell us—where are they?  
Through the darkness and the dawn  
We have journeyed on and on—  
From the cradle to the cross—  
From possession unto loss.—  
Seeking still, from day to day,  
For the Lands of Where-Away.



When our baby-feet were first  
Planted where the daisies burst,  
And the greenest grasses grew  
In the fields we wandered through,—  
On, with childish discontent,  
Ever on and on we went,  
Hoping still to pass, some day,  
O'er the verge of Where-Away.

## WHERE-AWAY

Roses laid their velvet lips  
On our own, with fragrant sips;  
But their kisses held us not,  
All their sweetness we forgot;—  
Though the brambles in our track  
Plucked at us to hold us back—  
“Just ahead,” we used to say,  
“Lie the Lands of Where-Away.”

Children at the pasture-bars,  
Through the dusk, like glimmering stars,  
Waved their hands that we should bide  
With them over eventide:  
Down the dark their voices failed  
Falteringly, as they hailed,  
And died into yesterday—  
Night ahead and—Where-Away?

Twining arms about us thrown—  
Warm caresses, all our own,  
Can but stay us for a spell—  
Love hath little new to tell  
To the soul in need supreme,  
Aching ever with the dream  
Of the endless bliss it may  
Find in Lands of Where-Away!

## THE HOME-GOING

WE must get home—for we have been away  
So long, it seems forever and a day!  
And O so very homesick we have grown,  
The laughter of the world is like a moan  
In our tired hearing, and its songs as vain,—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home: It hurts so, staying here,  
Where fond hearts must be wept out tear by tear,  
And where to wear wet lashes means, at best,  
When most our lack, the least our hope of rest—  
When most our need of joy, the more our pain—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home: All is so quiet there:  
The touch of loving hands on brow and hair—  
Dim rooms, wherein the sunshine is made mild—  
The lost love of the mother and the child

## THE HOME-GOING

Restored in restful lullabies of rain.—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home, where, as we nod and drowse,  
Time humors us and tiptoes through the house,  
And loves us best when sleeping baby-wise,  
With dreams—not tear-drops—brimming our  
clenched eyes,—

Pure dreams that know nor taint nor earthly  
stain—

We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home; and, unremembering there  
All gain of all ambitions otherwhere,  
Rest—from the feverish victory, and the crown  
Of conquest whose waste glory weighs us down.—  
Fame's fairest gifts we toss back with disdain—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

NOBODY on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,  
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time  
come on,—

And *then*, I want to say to you, we *needed* he'p about,  
As you'd admit, ef you'd a-seen the way the crops  
turned out!

A better quarter-section ner a richer soil warn't found  
Than this-here old-home place o' oun fer fifty miles  
around!—

The house was small—but plenty-big we found it from  
the day  
That John—our only livin' son—packed up and went  
away.

You see, we tuk sich pride in John—his mother more'n  
me—

That's natchurur; but *both* of us was proud as proud  
could be;

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

Fer the boy, from a little chap, was most oncommon  
bright,

And seemed in work as well as play to take the same  
delight.

He allus went a-whistlin' round the place, as glad at  
heart

As robins up at five o'clock to git an airy start;

And many a time 'fore daylight Mother's waked me up  
to say—

“Jest listen, David!—listen!—Johnny's beat the birds  
to-day!”

High-sperited from boyhood, with a most inquirin'  
turn,—

He wanted to learn ever'thing on earth they was to  
learn:

He'd ast more plaguy questions in a mortal-minute  
here

Than his grandpap in Paradise could answer in a year!

And *read!* w'y, his own mother learnt him how to read  
and spell;

And “The Childern of the Abbey”—w'y, he knowed that  
book as well

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

At fifteen as his parents!—and “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” too—

Jest knuckled down, the shaver did, and read ’em through and through!

At eighteen, Mother ’lowed the boy must have a better chance—

That we ort to educate him, under any circumstance;  
And John he j’ined his mother, and they ding-donged  
and kep’ on,

Tel I sent him off to school in town, half glad that he was gone.

But—I missed him—w’y, of course I did!—The Fall and Winter through

I never built the kitchen-fire, er split a stick in two,  
Er fed the stock, er butchered, er swung up a gambrel-pin,

But what I thought o’ John, and wished that he was home ag’in.

He’d come, sometimes—on Sund’ys most—and stay the Sund’y out;

And on Thanksgivin’-Day he ’peared to like to be about:

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

But a change was workin' on him—he was stiller than  
before,

And didn't joke, ner laugh, ner sing and whistle any  
more.

And his talk was all so proper; and I noticed, with a sigh,  
He was tryin' to raise side-whiskers, and had on a  
stripèd tie,

And a standin'-collar, ironed up as stiff and slick as  
bone;

And a breast-pin, and a watch and chain and plug-hat  
of his own.

But when Spring-weather opened out, and John was to  
come home

And he'p me through the season, I was glad to see him  
come;

But my happiness, that evening, with the settin' sun  
went down,

When he bragged of "a position" that was offered him  
in town.

"But," says I, "you'll not accept it?" "W'y, of course  
I will," says he.—

"This drudgin' on a farm," he says, "is not the life fer  
me;

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

I've set my stakes up higher," he continued, light and gay.

"And town's the place fer me, and I'm a-goin' right away!"

And go he did!—his mother clingin' to him at the gate,  
A-pleadin' and a-cryin'; but it hadn't any weight.

I was tranquiller, and told her 'twarn't no use to worry so,

And onclasped her arms from round his neck round mine—and let him go!

I felt a little bitter feelin' foolin' round about  
The aidges of my conscience; but I didn't let it out;—  
I simply retch out, trimbly-like, and tuk the boy's hand,

And though I didn't say a word, I knowed he'd understand.

And—well!—sence then the old home here was mighty lonesome, shore!

With me a-workin' in the field, and Mother at the door,  
Her face ferever to'rds the town, and fadin' more and more—

Her only son nine miles away, a-clerkin' in a store!

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

The weeks and months dragged by us; and sometimes  
the boy would write

A letter to his mother, sayin' that his work was light,  
And not to feel oneeasy about his health a bit—  
Though his business was confinin', he was gittin' used  
to it.

And sometimes he would write and ast how *I* was  
gittin' on,

And ef I had to pay out much fer he'p sence he was  
gone;

And how the hogs was doin', and the balance of the  
stock,

And talk on fer a page er two jest like he used to talk.

And he wrote, along 'fore harvest, that he guessed he  
would git home,

Fer business would, of course, be dull in town.—But  
*didn't* come:—

We got a postal later, sayin' when they had no trade  
They filled the time "invoicin' goods," and that was  
why he stayed.

And then he quit a-writin' altogether: Not a word—  
Exceptin' what the neighbors brung who'd been to  
town and heard

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

What store John was clerkin' in, and went round to  
inquire

If they could buy their goods there less and sell their  
produce higher.

And so the Summer faded out, and Autumn wore away,  
And a keener Winter never fetched around Thanks-  
givin'-Day!

The night before that day of thanks I'll never quite  
fergit,

The wind a-howlin' round the house—it makes me  
creepy yit!

And there set me and Mother—me a-twistin' at the  
prongs

Of a green scrub-ellum forestick with a vicious pair of  
tongs,

And Mother sayin', "*David! David!*" in a' undertone,  
As though she thought that I was thinkin' bad-words  
unbeknown.

"I've dressed the turkey, David, fer to-morrow," Mother  
said,

A-tryin' to wedge some pleasant subject in my stubborn  
head,—

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

“And the mince-meat I’m a-mixin’ is perfection mighty nigh;

And the pound-cake is delicious-rich—” “Who’ll eat ‘em?” I-says-I.

“The cranberries is drippin'-sweet,” says Mother, runnin’ on,

P’tendin’ not to hear me;—“and somehow I thought of John All the time they was a-jellin’—fer you know they allus was

His favorite—he likes ‘em so!” Says I, “Well, s’pose he does?”

“Oh, nothin’ much!” says Mother, with a quiet sort o’ smile—

“This gentleman behind my cheer may tell you after while!”

And as I turnt and looked around, some one riz up and leant

And putt his arms round Mother’s neck, and laughed in low content.

“It’s *me*,” he says—“your fool-boy John, come back to shake your hand;

Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you understand

## HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

How dearer yit than all the world is this old home  
that we

Will spend Thanksgivin' in fer life—jest Mother, you  
and me!"

• • • • • • •

Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,  
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time  
comes on;

And then, I want to say to you, we *need* sich he'p about,  
As you'd admit, ef you could see the way the crops  
turns out!

## NORTH AND SOUTH

OF the North I wove a dream,  
All bespangled with the gleam  
    Of the glancing wings of swallows  
Dipping ripples in a stream,  
That, like a tide of wine,  
Wound through lands of shade and shine  
Where purple grapes hung bursting on the vine.

And where orchard-boughs were bent  
Till their tawny fruitage blent  
    With the golden wake that marked the  
Way the happy reapers went;  
Where the dawn died into noon  
As the May-mists into June,  
And the dusk fell like a sweet face in a swoon.

Of the South I dreamed: And there  
Came a vision clear and fair  
    As the marvellous enchantments

## NORTH AND SOUTH

Of the mirage of the air;  
And I saw the bayou-trees,  
With their lavish draperies,  
Hang heavy o'er the moon-washed cypress-knees.

Peering from lush fens of rice,  
I beheld the Negro's eyes,  
Lit with that old superstition  
Death itself cannot disguise;  
And I saw the palm-tree nod  
Like an Oriental god,  
And the cotton froth and bubble from the pod.

And I dreamed that North and South,  
With a sigh of dew and drouth,  
Blew each unto the other  
The salute of lip and mouth;  
And I wakened, awed and thrilled—  
Every doubting murmur stilled  
In the silence of the dream I found fulfilled.

## THE IRON HORSE

No song is mine of Arab steed—  
My courser is of nobler blood,  
And cleaner limb and fleeter speed,  
And greater strength and hardihood  
Than ever cantered wild and free  
Across the plains of Araby.

Go search the level desert land  
From Sana on to Samarcand—  
Wherever Persian prince has been,  
Or Dervish, Sheik, or Bedouin,  
And I defy you there to point  
Me out a steed the half so fine—  
From tip of ear to pastern-joint—  
As this old iron horse of mine.

You do not know what beauty is—  
You do not know what gentleness  
His a "er is to my caress!—

## THE IRON HORSE

Why, look upon this gait of his,—  
A touch upon his iron rein—  
    He moves with such a stately grace  
The sunlight on his burnished mane  
    Is barely shaken in its place;  
    And at a touch he changes pace,  
And, gliding backward, stops again.

And talk of mettle—Ah! my friend,  
    Such passion smoulders in his breast  
That when awakened it will send  
    A thrill of rapture wilder than  
E'er palpitated heart of man  
    When flaming at its mightiest.

And there's a fierceness in his ire—  
    A maddened majesty that leaps  
Along his veins in blood of fire,  
    Until the path his vision sweeps  
Spins out behind him like a thread  
    Unravelled from the reel of time,  
    As, wheeling on his course sublime,  
The earth revolves beneath his tread.

Then stretch away, my gallant steed!  
    Thy mission is a noble one:  
    Thou bear'st the father to the son,

## THE IRON HORSE

And sweet relief to bitter need;  
Thou bear'st the stranger to his friends;  
    Thou bear'st the pilgrim to the shrine,  
And back again the prayer he sends  
    That God will prosper me and mine,—  
The star that on thy forehead gleams  
Has blossomed in our brightest dreams.  
Then speed thee on thy glorious race!  
The mother waits thy ringing pace;  
The father leans an anxious ear  
The thunder of thy hooves to hear;  
The lover listens, far away,  
To catch thy keen exultant neigh;  
And, where thy breathings roll and rise,  
The husband strains his eager eyes,  
And laugh of wife and baby-glee  
Ring out to greet and welcome thee.  
Then stretch away! and when at last  
    The master's hand shall gently check  
Thy mighty speed, and hold thee fast,  
    The world will pat thee on the neck.

## HIS MOTHER'S WAY

TOMPS 'ud allus haf to say  
Somepin' 'bout "his mother's way."—  
*He* lived hard-like—never jined  
Any church of any kind.—  
"It was Mother's way," says he,  
"To be good enough fer *me*  
And her too,—and certinly  
` Lord has heerd *her* pray!"  
Propped up on his dyin' bed,—  
"Shore as Heaven's overhead,  
I'm a-goin' there," he said—  
"It was Mother's way."

## JAP MILLER

JAP MILLER down at Martinsville's the blamedest feller  
yit!

When *he* starts in a-talkin' other folks is apt to quit!—  
'Pears like that mouth o' his'n wuzn't made fer nothin'  
else

But jes to argify 'em down and gether in their pelts:  
He'll talk you down on tariff; er he'll talk you down on  
tax,

And prove the pore man pays 'em all—and them's about  
the fac's!—

Religen, law, er politics, prize-fightin' er base-ball—  
Jes tetch Jap up a little and he'll post you 'bout 'em  
all.

And the comicalist feller ever tilted back a cheer  
And tuk a chaw tobacker kindo' like he didn't keer.—  
There's where the feller's stren'th lays,—he's so com-  
mon-like and plain,—

JAP MILLER

They hain't no dude about old Jap, you bet you—nary  
grain!

They 'lected him to Council and it never turned his  
head,

And didn't make no differunce what anybody said,—  
He didn't dress no finer, ner rag out in fancy clothes;  
But his voice in Council-meetin's is a turrer to his foes.

He's fer the pore man ever' time! And in the last cam-  
paign

He stumped old Morgan County, through the sunshine  
and the rain,

And held the banner up'ards from a-trailin' in the dust,  
And cut loose on monopolies and cuss'd and cuss'd and  
cuss'd!

He'd tell some funny story ever' now and then, you  
know,

Tel, blame it! it wuz better'n a Jack-o'-lantern show!  
And I'd go furder, yit, to-day, to hear old Jap norate  
Than any high-toned orater 'at ever stumped the State!

W'y, that-air blame Jap Miller, with his keen sircastic  
fun,

Has got more friends than ary candidate 'at ever run!

JAP MILLER

Don't matter what *his* views is, when he states the same  
to you,

They allus coincide with your'n, the same as two and  
two:

You *can't* take issue with him—er, at least, they hain't  
no sense

In startin' in to down him, so you better not com-  
mence.—

The best way's jes to listen, like your humble servant  
does,

And jes concede Jap Miller is the best man ever wuz!

## A SOUTHERN SINGER

*Written in Madison Cawein's "Lyrics and Idyls"*

HEREIN are blown from out the South  
Songs blithe as those of Pan's pursed mouth—  
As sweet in voice as, in perfume,  
The night-breath of magnolia-bloom.

Such sumptuous languor lures the sense—  
Such luxury of indolence—  
The eyes blur as a nymph's might blur,  
With water-lilies watching her.

You waken, thrilling at the trill  
Of some wild bird that seems to spill  
The silence full of winy drips  
Of song that Fancy sips and sips.

Betimes, in brambled lanes wherethrough  
The chipmunk stripes himself from view,

A SOUTHERN SINGER

You pause to lop a creamy spray  
Of elder-blossoms by the way.

Or where the morning dew is yet  
Gray on the topmost rail, you set  
A sudden palm and, vaulting, meet  
Your vaulting shadow in the wheat.

On lordly swards, of suave incline,  
Entessellate with shade and shine,  
You shall misdoubt your lowly birth,  
Clad on as one of princely worth:

The falcon on your wrist shall ride—  
Your milk-white Arab side by side  
With one of raven-black.—You fain  
Would kiss the hand that holds the rein.

Nay, nay, Romancer! Poet! Seer!  
Sing us back home—from there to here:  
Grant your high grace and wit, but we  
Most honor your simplicity.—

Herein are blown from out the South  
Songs blithe as those of Pan's pursed mouth—  
As sweet in voice as, in perfume,  
The night-breath of magnolia-bloom.

## A DREAM OF AUTUMN

MELLOW hazes, lowly trailing  
Over wood and meadow, veiling  
Sombre skies, with wild-fowl sailing  
    Sailor-like to foreign lands;  
And the north wind overleaping  
Summer's brink, and flood-like sweeping  
Wrecks of roses where the weeping-  
    Willows wring their helpless hands.

Flared, like Titan torches flinging  
Flakes of flame and embers, springing  
From the vale, the trees stand swinging  
    In the moaning atmosphere;  
While in dead'ning lands the lowing  
Of the cattle, sadder growing,  
Fills the sense to overflowing  
    With the sorrow of the year.

## A DREAM OF AUTUMN

Sorrowfully, yet the sweeter  
Sings the brook in rippled metre  
Under boughs that lithely teeter  
    Lorn birds, answering from the shores  
Through the viny, shady-shiny  
Interspaces, shot with tiny  
Flying motes that fleck the winy  
    Wave-engraven sycamores.

Fields of ragged stubble, wrangled  
With rank weeds, and shocks of tangled  
Corn, with crests like rent plumes dangled  
    Over Harvest's battle-plain;  
And the sudden whir and whistle  
Of the quail that, like a missile,  
Whizzes over thorn and thistle,  
    And, a missile, drops again.

Muffled voices, hid in thickets  
Where the redbird stops to stick its  
Ruddy beak betwixt the pickets  
    Of the truant's rustic trap;  
And the sound of laughter ringing  
Where, within the wild vine swinging,  
Climb Bacchante's schoolmates, flinging  
    Purple clusters in her lap.

A DREAM OF AUTUMN

Rich as wine, the sunset flashes  
Round the tilted world, and dashes  
Up the sloping west, and splashes  
    Red foam over sky and sea—  
Till my dream of Autumn, paling  
In the splendor all-prevailing,  
Like a sallow leaf goes sailing  
    Down the silence solemnly.

## TOM VAN ARDEN

F

TOM VAN ARDEN, my old friend,  
Our warm fellowship is one  
Far too old to comprehend  
Where its bond was first begun:  
Mirage-like before my gaze  
Gleams a land of other days,  
Where two truant boys, astray,  
Dream their lazy lives away.

There's a vision, in the guise  
Of Midsummer, where the Past  
Like a weary beggar lies  
In the shadow Time has cast;  
And as blends the bloom of trees  
With the drowsy hum of bees,  
Fragrant thoughts and murmurs blend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

TOM VAN ARDEN

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
All the pleasures we have known  
Thrill me now as I extend  
This old hand and grasp your own—  
Feeling, in the rude caress,  
All affection's tenderness;  
Feeling, though the touch be rough,  
Our old souls are soft enough.

So we'll make a mellow hour:  
Fill your pipe, and taste the wine—  
Warp your face, if it be sour,  
I can spare a smile from mine;  
If it sharpen up your wit,  
Let me feel the edge of it—  
I have eager ears to lend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Are we “lucky dogs,” indeed?  
Are we all that we pretend  
In the jolly life we lead?—  
Bachelors, we must confess,  
Boast of “single blessedness”  
To the world, but not alone—  
Man's best sorrow is his own!

TOM VAN ARDEN

And the saddest truth is this,—  
Life to us has never proved  
What we tasted in the kiss  
Of the women we have loved:  
Vainly we congratulate  
Our escape from such a fate  
As their lying lips could send,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend!

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Hearts, like fruit upon the stem,  
Ripen sweetest, I contend,  
As the frost falls over them:  
Your regard for me to-day  
Makes November taste of May,  
And through every vein of rhyme  
Pours the blood of summer-time.

When our souls are cramped with youth  
Happiness seems far away  
In the future, while, in truth,  
We look back on it to-day  
Through our tears, nor dare to boast,—  
“Better to have loved and lost!”  
Broken hearts are hard to mend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

TOM VAN ARDEN

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
I grow prosy, and you tire;  
Fill the glasses while I bend  
To prod up the failing fire. . . .

You are restless:—I presume  
There's a dampness in the room.—  
Much of warmth our nature begs,  
With rheumatics in our legs! . . .

Humph! the legs we used to fling  
Limber-jointed in the dance,  
When we heard the fiddle ring  
Up the curtain of Romance,  
And in crowded public halls  
Played with hearts like jugglers' balls.—  
*Feats of mountebanks, depend!*—  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Pardon, then, this theme of mine:  
While the firelight leaps to lend  
Higher color to the wine,—  
I propose a health to those  
Who have *homes*, and home's repose,  
Wife- and child-love without end!  
. . . Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

## JUST TO BE GOOD

JUST to be good—

This is enough—enough!

O we who find sin's billows wild and rough,  
Do we not feel how more than any gold  
Would be the blameless life we led of old  
While yet our lips knew but a mother's kiss!

Ah! though we miss

All else but this,

To be good is enough!

It is enough—

Enough—just to be good!

To lift our hearts where they are understood;  
To let the thirst for worldly power and place  
Go unappeased; to smile back in God's face  
With the glad lips our mothers used to kiss.

Ah! though we miss

All else but this,

To be good is enough!

## HOME AT NIGHT

WHEN chirping crickets fainter cry,  
And pale stars blossom in the sky,  
And twilight's gloom has dimmed the bloom  
And blurred the butterfly:

When locust-blossoms fleck the walk,  
And up the tiger-lily stalk  
The glow-worm crawls and clings and falls  
And glimmers down the garden-walls:

When buzzing things, with double wings  
Of crisp and raspish flutterings,  
Go whizzing by so very nigh  
One thinks of fangs and stings:—

O then, within, is stilled the din  
Of crib she rocks the baby in,  
And heart and gate and latch's weight  
Are lifted—and the lips of Kate.

## THE HOOSIER FOLK-CHILD

THE Hoosier Folk-Child—all unsung—  
Unlettered all of mind and tongue;  
Unmastered, unmolested—made  
Most wholly frank and unafraid:  
Untaught of any school—unvexed  
Of law or creed—all unperplexed—  
Unsermoned, ay, and undefiled,  
An all imperfect-perfect child—  
A type which (Heaven forgive us!) you  
And I do tardy honor to,  
And so profane the sanctities  
Of our most sacred memories.  
Who, growing thus from boy to man,  
That dares not be American?  
Go, Pride, with prudent underbuzz—  
Go *whistle!* as the Folk-Child does.

## THE HOOSIER FOLK-CHILD

The Hoosier Folk-Child's world is not  
Much wider than the stable-lot  
Between the house and highway fence  
That bounds the home his father rents.  
His playmates mostly are the ducks  
And chickens, and the boy that "shucks  
Corn by the shock," and talks of town,  
And whether eggs are "up" or "down,"  
And prophesies in boastful tone  
Of "owning horses of his own,"  
And "being his own man," and "when  
He gets to be, what he'll do then."—  
Takes out his jack-knife dreamily  
And makes the Folk-Child two or three  
Crude corn-stalk figures,—a wee span  
Of horses and a little man.

The Hoosier Folk-Child's eyes are wise  
And wide and round as brownies' eyes:  
The smile they wear is ever blent  
With all-expectant wonderment,—  
On homeliest things they bend a look  
As rapt as o'er a picture-book,  
And seem to ask, whate'er befall,  
The happy reason of it all:—

## THE HOOSIER FOLK-CHILD

Why grass is all so glad a green,  
And leaves—and what their lisplings mean;—  
Why buds grow on the boughs, and why  
They burst in blossom by and by—  
As though the orchard in the breeze  
Had shook and popped its *pop-corn trees*,  
To lure and whet, as well they might,  
Some seven-league giant's appetite!

The Hoosier Folk-Child's chubby face  
Has scant refinement, caste or grace,—  
From crown to chin, and cheek to cheek,  
It bears the grimy water-streak  
Of rinsings such as some long rain  
Might drool across the window-pane  
Wherethrough he peers, with troubled frown,  
As some lorn team drives by for town.  
His brow is elfed with wispish hair,  
With tangles in it here and there,  
As though the warlocks snarled it so  
At midmirk when the moon sagged low,  
And boughs did toss and skreek and shake,  
And children moaned themselves awake,  
With fingers clutched, and starting sight  
Blind as the blackness of the night!

## THE HOOSIER FOLK-CHILD

The Hoosier Folk-Child!—Rich is he  
In all the wealth of poverty!  
He owns nor title nor estate,  
Nor speech but half articulate,—  
He owns nor princely robe nor crown;—  
Yet, draped in patched and faded brown,  
He owns the bird-songs of the hills—  
The laughter of the April rills;  
And his are all the diamonds set  
In Morning's dewy coronet,—  
And his the Dusk's first minted stars  
That twinkle through the pasture-bars  
And litter all the skies at night  
With glittering scraps of silver light;—  
The rainbow's bar, from rim to rim,  
In beaten gold, belongs to him.

## JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

*Bad Boy's Version*

TELL you a story—an' it's a fac':—  
Wunst wuz a little boy, name wuz Jack,  
An' he had sword an' buckle an' strap  
Maked of gold, an' a "'visibul cap";  
An' he killed Gi'nts 'at et whole cows—  
Th' horns an' all—an' pigs an' sows!  
But Jack, his golding sword wuz, oh!  
So awful sharp 'at he could go  
An' cut th' ole Gi'nts clean in two  
'Fore 'ey knowed what he wuz goin' to do!  
An' *one* ole Gi'nt, he had four  
. Heads, an' name wuz "Bumblebore"—  
An' he wuz feared o' Jack—'cause he,  
*Jack*, he killed six—five—ten—three,  
An' all o' th' uther ole Gi'nts but him:  
An' thay wuz a place Jack haf to swim

## JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

'Fore he could git t' ole "Bumblebore"—  
Nen thay wuz "griffuns" at the door:  
But Jack, he thist plunged in an' swum  
Clean acrost; an' when he come  
To th' uther side, he thist put on  
His "'visibul cap," an' nen, dog-gone!  
You couldn't see him at all!—An' so  
He slewed the " griffuns"—*boff*, you know!  
Nen wuz a horn hunged over his head,  
High on th' wall, an' words 'at read,—  
"Whoever kin this trumput blow  
Shall cause the Gi'nt's overth'ow!"  
An' Jack, he thist reached up an' blowed  
The stuffin' out of it! an' th'owed  
Th' castul-gates wide open, an'  
Nen tuk his gold sword in his han',  
An' thist marched in t' ole "Bumblebore,"  
An', 'fore he knowed, he put 'bout four  
Heads on him—an' chopped 'em off, too!—  
Wisht 'at *I'd* been Jack!—don't you?

## WHILE THE MUSICIAN PLAYED

Or it was but a dream I had  
While the musician played!—  
And here the sky, and here the glad  
Old ocean kissed the glade;  
And here the laughing ripples ran,  
And here the roses grew  
That threw a kiss to every man  
That voyaged with the crew.

Our silken sails in lazy folds  
Drooped in the breathless breeze:  
As o'er a field of marigolds  
Our eyes swam o'er the seas;  
While here the eddies lisped and purled  
Around the island's rim,  
And up from out the underworld  
We saw the mermen swim.

WHILE THE MUSICIAN PLAYED

And it was dawn and middle-day  
    And midnight—for the moon  
On silver rounds across the bay  
    Had climbed the skies of June,—  
And there the glowing, glorious king  
    Of day ruled o'er his realm,  
With stars of midnight glittering  
    About his diadem.

The sea-gull reeled on languid wing  
    In circles round the mast,  
We heard the songs the sirens sing  
    As we went sailing past;  
And up and down the golden sands  
    A thousand fairy throngs  
Flung at us from their flashing hands  
    The echoes of their songs.

O it was but a dream I had  
    While the musician played!—  
For here the sky, and here the glad  
    Old ocean kissed the glade;  
And here the laughing ripples ran,  
    And here the roses grew  
That threw a kiss to every man  
    That voyaged with the crew.

## AUGUST

A DAY of torpor in the sullen heat  
    Of Summer's passion: In the sluggish stream  
The panting cattle lave their lazy feet,  
    With drowsy eyes, and dream.

Long since the winds have died, and in the sky  
    There lives no cloud to hint of Nature's grief;  
The sun glares ever like an evil eye,  
    And withers flower and leaf.

Upon the gleaming harvest-field remote  
    The thresher lies deserted, like some old  
Dismantled galleon that hangs afloat  
    Upon a sea of gold.

The yearning cry of some bewildered bird  
    Above an empty nest, and truant boys

AUGUST

Along the river's shady margin heard—

A harmony of noise—

A melody of wrangling voices blent

With liquid laughter, and with rippling calls  
Of piping lips and trilling echoes sent

To mimic waterfalls.

And through the hazy veil the atmosphere

Has draped about the gleaming face of Day,  
The sifted glances of the sun appear

In splinterings of spray.

The dusty highway, like a cloud of dawn,

Trails o'er the hillside, and the passer-by,  
A tired ghost in misty shroud, toils on  
His journey to the sky.

And down across the valley's drooping sweep,

Withdrawn to farthest limit of the glade,  
The forest stands in silence, drinking deep  
Its purple wine of shade.

The gossamer floats up on phantom wing;

The sailor-vision voyages the skies  
And carries into chaos everything  
That freights the weary eyes:

## AUGUST

Till, throbbing on and on, the pulse of heat  
Increases—reaches—passes fever's height,  
And Day sinks into slumber, cool and sweet,  
Within the arms of Night.

## TO HEAR HER SING

To hear her sing—to hear her sing—  
It is to hear the birds of Spring  
In dewy groves on blooming sprays  
Pour out their blithest roundelays.

It is to hear the robin trill  
At morning, or the whippoorwill  
At dusk, when stars are blossoming—  
To hear her sing—to hear her sing!

To hear her sing—it is to hear  
The laugh of childhood ringing clear  
In woody path or grassy lane  
Our feet may never fare again.

Faint, far away as Memory dwells,  
It is to hear the village bells

TO HEAR HER SING

At twilight, as the truant hears  
Them, hastening home, with smiles and tears.

Such joy it is to hear her sing,  
We fall in love with everything—  
The simple things of every day  
Grow lovelier than words can say.

The idle brooks that purl across  
The gleaming pebbles and the moss  
We love no less than classic streams—  
The Rhines and Arnos of our dreams.

To hear her sing—with folded eyes,  
It is, beneath Venetian skies,  
To hear the gondoliers' refrain,  
Or troubadours of sunny Spain.—

To hear the bulbul's voice that shook  
The throat that trilled for Lalla Rookh;  
What wonder we in homage bring  
Our hearts to her—to hear her sing!

## BEING HIS MOTHER

BEING his mother,—when he goes away  
I would not hold him overlong, and so  
Sometimes my yielding sight of him grows O  
So quick of tears, I joy he did not stay  
To catch the faintest rumor of them! Nay,  
Leave always his eyes clear and glad, although  
Mine own, dear Lord, do fill to overflow;  
Let his remembered features, as I pray,  
Smile ever on me! Ah! what stress of love  
Thou givest me to guard with Thee thiswise:  
Its fullest speech ever to be denied  
Mine own—being his mother! All thereof  
Thou knowest only, looking from the skies  
As when not Christ alone was crucified.

## JUNE AT WOODRUFF

OUT at Woodruff Place—afar  
From the city's glare and jar,  
With the leafy trees, instead  
Of the awnings, overhead;  
With the shadows cool and sweet,  
For the fever of the street;  
With the silence, like a prayer,  
Breathing round us everywhere.

Gracious anchorage, at last,  
From the billows of the vast  
Tide of life that comes and goes,  
Whence and where nobody knows—  
Moving, like a sceptic's thought,  
Out of nowhere into naught.  
Touch and tame us with thy grace,  
Placid calm of Woodruff Place!

## JUNE AT WOODRUFF

Weave a wreath of beechen leaves  
For the brow that throbs and grieves  
O'er the ledger, bloody-lined,  
'Neath the sunstruck window-blind!  
Send the breath of woodland bloom  
Through the sick man's prison-room,  
Till his old farm-home shall swim  
Sweet in mind to hearten him!

Out at Woodruff Place the Muse  
Dips her sandal in the dews,  
Sacredly as night and dawn  
Baptize lilyed grove and lawn:  
Woody path, or paven way—  
She doth haunt them night and day,—  
Sun or moonlight through the trees,  
To her eyes, are melodies.

Swinging lanterns, twinkling clear  
Through night-scenes, are songs to her—  
Tinted lilts and choiring hues,  
Blent with children's glad halloos;  
Then belated lays that fade  
Into midnight's serenade—  
Vine-like words and zithern-strings  
Twined through all her slumberings.

## JUNE AT WOODRUFF

Blessèd be each hearthstone set  
Neighboring the violet!  
Blessèd every roof-tree prayed  
Over by the beech's shade!  
Blessèd doorway, opening where  
We may look on Nature—there  
Hand to hand and face to face—  
Storied realm, or Woodruff Place.

## FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

It's a mystery to see me—a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and  
more—

A-lookin' glad and smilin'! And they's none o' you can  
say

That you can guess the reason why I feel so good to-day.

I must tell you all about it! But I'll have to deviate  
A little in beginnin', so's to set the matter straight  
As to how it comes to happen that I never took a wife—  
Kindo' "crawfish" from the Present to the Springtime  
of my life!

I was brought up in the country: Of a family of five—  
Three brothers and a sister—I'm the only one alive,—  
Fer they all died little babies; and 'twas one o' Mother's  
ways,

You know, to want a daughter; so she took a girl to  
raise.

FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

The sweetest little thing she was, with rosy cheeks, and  
fat—

We was little chunks o' shavers then about as high as  
that!

But someway we sorto' *suited*-like! and Mother she'd  
declare

She never laid her eyes on a more lovin' pair

Than *we* was! So we growed up side by side fer thirteen  
year',

And every hour of it she growed to me more dear!—

W'y, even Father's dyin', as he did, I do believe

Warn't more affectin' to me than it was to see her grieve!

I was then a lad o' twenty; and I felt a flash o' pride  
In thinkin' all depended on *me* now to pervide  
Fer Mother and fer Mary; and I went about the place  
With sleeves rolled up—and workin', with a mighty  
smilin' face.—

Fer *somepin'* else was workin'! but not a word I said  
Of a certain sort o' notion that was runnin' through my  
head,—

“Some day I'd mayby marry, and a *brother's* love was one  
Thing—a *lover's* was another!” was the way the notion  
run!

FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

I remember onc't in harvest, when the “cradle-in’” was  
done,

(When the harvest of my summers mounted up to  
twenty-one),

I was ridin’ home with Mary at the closin’ o’ the day—  
A-chawin’ straws and thinkin’, in a lover’s lazy way!

And Mary’s cheeks was burnin’ like the sunset down the  
lane:

I noticed she was thinkin’, too, and ast her to explain.  
Well—when she turned and *kissed* me, *with her arms  
around me—law!*

I’d a bigger load o’ heaven than I had a load o’ straw!

I don’t p’tend to learnin’, but I’ll tell you what’s a  
fac’,

They’s a mighty truthful sayin’ somers in a’ almanac—  
Er *somers*—’bout “puore happiness”—perhaps some  
folks’ll laugh

At the idy—“only lastin’ jest two seconds and a  
half.”—

But it’s jest as true as preachin’!—fer that was a *sister’s*  
kiss,

And a sister’s lovin’ confidence a-tellin’ to me this:—

FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

*“She was happy, bein’ promised to the son o’ Farmer Brown.”—*

And my feelin’s struck a pardnership with sunset and went down!

I don’t know *how* I acted, and I don’t know *what* I said,—  
Fer my heart seemed jest a-turnin’ to an ice-cold lump  
o’ lead;

And the hosses kindo’ glimmered before me in the road,  
And the lines fell from my fingers—And that was all I  
knowed—

Fer—well, I don’t know *how* long—They’s a dim remem-  
berence

Of a sound o’ snortin’ horses, and a stake-and-ridered  
fence

A-whizzin’ past, and wheat-sheaves a-dancin’ in the air,  
And Mary screamin’ “Murder!” and a-runnin’ up to where

*I was layin’ by the roadside, and the wagon upside down  
A-leanin’ on the gate-post, with the wheels a-whirlin’  
roun’!*

And I tried to raise and meet her, but I couldn’t, with  
a vague

Sorto’ notion comin’ to me that I had a broken leg.

FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

Well, the women nussed me through it; but many a time  
I'd sigh

As I'd keep a-gittin' better instid o' goin' to die,  
And wonder what was left *me* worth livin' fer below,  
When the girl I loved was married to another, don't you  
know!

And my thoughts was as rebellious as the folks was  
good and kind

When Brown and Mary married—Railly must 'a' been my  
*mind*

Was kindo' out o' kilter!—fer I hated Brown, you see,  
Worse'n *pizen*—and the feller whittled crutches out fer  
*me*—

And done a thousand little ac's o' kindness and respec'—  
And me a-wishin' all the time that I could break his  
neck!

My relief was like a mourner's when the funeral is  
done

When they moved to Illinois in the Fall o' Forty-one.

Then I went to work in airnest—I had nothin' much in  
view

But to drownd out rickollections—and it kep' me busy,  
too!

FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

But I slowly thrived and prospered, tel Mother used to say  
She expected yit to see me a wealthy man some day.

Then I'd think how little *money* was, compared to hap-  
piness—

And who'd be left to use it when I died I couldn't guess!  
But I've still kep' speculatin' and a-gainin' year by year,  
Tel I'm payin' half the taxes in the county, mighty near!

Well!—A year ago er better, a letter comes to hand  
Astin' how I'd like to dicker fer some Illinois land—  
“The feller that had owned it,” it went ahead to state,  
“Had jest deceased, insolvent, leavin’ chance to specu-  
late,”—

And then it closed by sayin’ that I’d “better come and  
see.”—

I'd never been West, anyhow—a'most too wild fer *me*,  
I'd allus had a notion; but a lawyer here in town  
Said I'd find myself mistakend when I come to look  
around.

So I bids good-bye to Mother, and I jumps aboard the  
train,  
A-thinkin' what I'd bring her when I come back home  
again—

FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

And ef she'd had an idy what the present was to be,  
I think it's more'n likely she'd 'a' went along with me!

Cars is awful teju's ridin', fer all they go so fast!  
But finally they called out my stoppin'-place at last:  
And that night, at the tavern, I dreamp' I was a train  
O' cars, and *skeered* at somepin', runnin' down a country  
lane!

Well, in the morning airy—after huntin' up the man—  
The lawyer who was wantin' to swap the piece o'  
land—

We started fer the country; and I ast the history  
Of the farm—its former owner—and so forth, etcetera!

And—well—it was interestin'—I su'prised him, I suppose,  
By the loud and frequent manner in which I blowed my  
nose!—

But his su'prise was greater, and it made him wonder  
more,

When I kissed and hugged the widder when she met us  
at the door!—

*It was Mary:* . . . They's a feelin' a-hidin' down in here—  
Of course I can't explain it, ner ever make it clear.—

## FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR

It was with us in that meetin', I don't want you to  
fergit!

And it makes me kindo' nervous when I think about it  
yit!

I bought that farm, and *deeded* it, afore I left the town,  
With "title clear to mansions in the skies," to Mary  
Brown!

And fu'thermore, I took her and the *childern*—fer you  
see,

They'd never seed their Grandma—and I fetched 'em  
home with me.

So now you've got an idy why a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and  
more,

Is a-lookin' glad and smilin'!—And I've jest come into  
town

To git a pair o' license fer to *marry* Mary Brown.

## DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL

### I

DAWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin  
Up and at it airy, and the orchard-blossoms bobbin'!  
Peekin' from the winder, half awake, and wishin'  
I could go to sleep ag'in as well as go a-fishin'!

### II

On the apern o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,  
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o' clover:  
Fish all out a-visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!  
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hands is gone to  
dinner.

### III

Trompin' home across the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin'  
In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps  
a-thinkin':—  
Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to cherr  
me;  
And fiddle on the kitchen wall a-jist a-eechin' fer me!

## NESSMUK

I HAIL thee, Nessmuk, for the lofty tone  
    Yet simple grace that marks thy poetry!  
True forester thou art, and still to be,  
Even in happier fields than thou hast known.  
Thus, in glad visions, glimpses am I shown  
    Of groves delectable—"preserves" for  
        thee—  
Ranged but by friends of thine—I name  
    thee three:—  
First, Chaucer, with his bald old pate new-grown  
    With changeless laurel; next, in Lincoln-  
        green,  
Gold-belted, -bowed and bugled, Robin  
        Hood;  
And next, Ike Walton, patient and serene:  
These three, O Nessmuk, gathered hunter-wise,  
Are camped on hither slopes of Paradise,  
    To hail thee first and greet thee, as they  
        should.

## AS MY UNCLE UST TO SAY

I'VE thought a power on men and things—

As my uncle ust to say,—

And ef folks don't work as they pray, i jings!

W'y, they ain't no use to pray!

If you want somepin', and jes dead-set

A-pleadin' fer it with both eyes wet,

And *tears* won't bring it, w'y, you try *sweat*,

As my uncle ust to say.

They's some don't know their A, B, C's—

As my uncle ust to say—

And yit don't waste no candle-grease,

Ner whistle their lives away!

But ef they can't write no book, ner rhyme

No ringin' song fer to last all time,

They can blaze the way fer "the march sublime,"

As my uncle ust to say.

AS MY UNCLE UST TO SAY

Whoever's Foreman of all things here,  
As my uncle ust to say,  
He knows each job 'at we're best fit fer,  
And our round-up, night and day:  
And a-sizin' *His* work, east and west,  
And north and south, and worst and best,  
I ain't got nothin' to suggest,  
As my uncle ust to say.

## THE SINGER

WHILE with Ambition's hectic flame  
    He wastes the midnight oil,  
And dreams, high-throned on heights of fame,  
    To rest him from his toil,—

Death's Angel, like a vast eclipse,  
    Above him spreads her wings,  
And fans the embers of his lips  
    To ashes as he sings.

## A FULL HARVEST

SEEMS like a feller'd ort'o jes to-day  
    Git down and roll and waller, don't you know,  
    In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,  
Seein' sich craps! I'll undertake to say  
There're no wheat's ever turned out thataway  
    Afore this season!—Folks is keerless, tho',  
    And too fergitful—'caze we'd ort'o show  
More thankfulness!—Jes looky hyonder, hey?—  
    And watch that little reaper wadin' thue  
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground—  
    Jes natchur'ly a-slicin' it in two  
Like honeycomb, and gaumin' it around  
    The field—like it had nothin' else to do  
    On'y jes waste it all on me and you!

## BLIND

You think it is a sorry thing  
That I am blind. Your pitying  
Is welcome to me; yet indeed,  
I think I have but little need.  
Of it. Though you may marvel much  
That *we*, who see by sense of touch  
And taste and hearing, see things *you*  
May never look upon; and true  
Is it that even in the scent  
Of blossoms *we* find something meant  
No eyes have in their faces read,  
Or wept to see interpreted.

And you might think it strange if now  
I told you you were smiling. How  
Do I know that? I hold your hand—  
*Its* language I can understand—

Give both to me, and I will show  
You many other things I know.  
Listen: We never met before  
Till now?—Well, you are something lower  
Than five-feet-eight in height; and you  
Are slender; and your eyes are blue—  
Your mother's eyes—your mother's hair—  
Your mother's likeness everywhere  
Save in your walk—and that is quite  
Your father's; nervous.—Am I right?  
I thought so. And you used to sing,  
But have neglected everything  
Of vocalism—though you may  
Still thrum on the guitar, and play  
A little on the violin,—  
I know that by the callus in  
The finger-tips of your left hand—  
And, by the by, though nature planned  
You as most men, you are, I see,  
“*Left-handed*,” too,—the mystery  
Is clear, though,—your right arm has been  
Broken, to “break” the left one in.  
And so, you see, though blind of sight,  
I still have ways of seeing quite  
Too well for you to sympathize  
Excessively, with your good eyes.—

BLIND

Though *once*, perhaps, to be sincere,  
Within the whole asylum here,  
From cupola to basement hall,  
I was the blindest of them all!

Let us move farther down the walk—  
The man here waiting hears my talk,  
And is disturbed; besides, he may  
Not be quite friendly anyway.  
In fact—(this will be far enough;  
Sit down)—the man just spoken of  
Was once a friend of mine. He came  
For treatment here from Burlingame--  
A rich though brilliant student there,  
Who read his eyes out of repair,  
And groped his way up here, where we  
Became acquainted, and where he  
Met one of our girl-teachers, and,  
If you'll believe me, asked her hand  
In marriage, though the girl was blind  
As I am—and the girl *declined*.  
Odd, wasn't it? Look, you can see  
Him waiting there. Fine, isn't he?  
And handsome, eloquently wide  
And high of brow, and dignified

## BLIND

With every outward grace, his sight  
Restored to him, clear and bright  
As day-dawn; waiting, waiting still  
For the blind girl that never will  
Be wife of his. How do I know?  
You will recall a while ago  
I told you he and I were friends.  
In all that friendship comprehends,  
I *was* his friend, I swear! why, now,  
Remembering his love, and how  
His confidence was all my own,  
I hear, in fancy, the low tone  
Of his deep voice, so full of pride  
And passion, yet so pacified  
With his affliction, that it seems  
An utterance sent out of dreams  
Of saddest melody, withal  
So sorrowfully musical  
It was, and is, must ever be—  
But I'm digressing, pardon me.  
*I* knew not anything of love  
In those days, but of that above  
All worldly passion,—for my art—  
Music,—and that, with all my heart  
And soul, blent in a love too great  
For words of mine to estimate.

BLIND

And though among my pupils she  
Whose love my friend sought came to me,  
I only knew her fingers' touch  
Because they loitered overmuch  
In simple scales, and needs must be  
Untangled almost constantly.  
But she was bright in other ways,  
And quick of thought; with ready plays  
Of wit, and with a voice as sweet  
To listen to as one might meet  
In any oratorio—  
And once I gravely told her so,—  
And, at my words, her limpid tone  
Of laughter faltered to a moan,  
And fell from that into a sigh  
That quavered all so wearily,  
That I, without the tear that crept  
Between the keys, had known she wept;  
And yet the hand I reached for then  
She caught away, and laughed again.  
And when that evening I strolled  
With my old friend, I, smiling, told  
Him I believed the girl and he  
Were matched and mated perfectly:  
He was so noble; she, so fair  
Of speech, and womanly of air;

He, strong, ambitious; she, as mild  
And artless even as a child;  
And with a nature, I was sure,  
As worshipful as it was pure  
And sweet, and brimmed with tender things  
Beyond his rarest fancyings.

He stopped me solemnly. He knew,  
He said, how good, and just, and true  
Was all I said of her; but as  
For his own virtues, let them pass,  
Since they were nothing to the one  
That he had set his heart upon;  
For but that morning she had turned  
Forever from him. Then I learned  
That for a month he had delayed  
His going from us, with no aid  
Of hope to hold him,—meeting still  
Her ever-firm denial, till  
Not even in his new-found sight  
He found one comfort or delight.  
And as his voice broke there, I felt  
The brother-heart within me melt  
In warm compassion for his own  
That throbbed so utterly alone.  
And then a sudden fancy hit  
Along my brain; and coupling it

## BLIND

With a belief that I, indeed,  
Might help my friend in his great need,  
I warmly said that I would go  
Myself, if he decided so,  
And see her for him—that I knew  
My pleadings would be listened to  
Most seriously, and that she  
Should love him, listening to me.  
Go; bless me! And that was the last—  
The last time his warm hand shut fast  
Within my own—so empty since,  
That the remembered finger-prints  
I've kissed a thousand times, and wet  
Them with the tears of all regret!

I know not how to rightly tell  
How fared my quest, and what befell  
Me, coming in the presence of  
That blind girl, and her blinder love.  
I know but little else than that  
Above the chair in which she sat  
I leant—reached for, and found her hand,  
And held it for a moment, and  
Took up the other—held them both—  
As might a friend, I will take oath:

BLIND

Spoke leisurely, as might a man  
Praying for no thing other than  
He thinks Heaven's justice:—She was blind,  
I said, and yet a noble mind  
Most truly loved her; one whose fond  
Clear-sighted vision looked beyond  
The bounds of her infirmity,  
And saw the woman, perfectly  
Modelled, and wrought out pure and true  
And lovable. She quailed, and drew  
Her hands away, but closer still  
I caught them. “Rack me as you will!”  
She cried out sharply—“Call me ‘blind’—  
Love ever is—I am resigned!  
Blind is your friend; as blind as he  
Am I—but blindest of the three—  
Yea, blind as death—you will not see  
My love for you is killing me!”

There is a memory that may  
Not ever wholly fade away  
From out my heart, so bright and fair  
The light of it still glimmers there.  
Why, it did seem as though my sight  
Flamed back upon me, dazzling white

BLIND

And godlike. Not one other word  
Of hers I listened for or heard,  
But I *saw* songs sung in her eyes  
Till they did swoon up drowning-wise,  
As my mad lips did strike her own,  
And we flashed one, and one alone!  
Ah! was it treachery for me  
To kneel there, drinking eagerly  
That torrent-flow of words that swept  
Out laughingly the tears she wept?—  
Sweet words! O sweeter far, maybe,  
Than light of day to those that see,—  
God knows, who did the rapture send  
To me, and hold it from my friend.

And we were married half a year  
Ago.—And he is—waiting here,  
Heedless of that—or anything,  
But just that he is lingering  
To say good-bye to her, and bow—  
As you may see him doing now,—  
For there's her footstep in the hall;  
God bless her!—help him!—save us all!

## RIGHT HERE AT HOME

RIGHT here at home, boys, in old Hoosierdom,  
Where strangers allus joke us when they come,  
And brag o' *their* old States and interprize—  
*Yit settle* here; and 'fore they realize,  
They're "hoosier" as the rest of us, and live  
Right here at home, boys, with their past fergive' !

Right here at home, boys, is the place, I guess,  
Fer me and you and plain old happiness:  
We hear the World's lots grander—likely so,—  
We'll take the World's word fer it and not go.—  
We know *its* ways ain't *our* ways—so we'll stay  
Right here at home, boys, where we *know* the way.

Right here at home, boys, where a well-to-do  
Man's plenty rich enough—and knows it, too,  
And's got a' extry dollar, any time,  
To boost a feller up 'at *wants* to climb

## RIGHT HERE AT HOME

And's got the git-up in him to go in  
And *git there*, like he purt'-nigh allus kin!

Right here at home, boys, is the place fer us!—  
Where folks' heart's bigger'n their money-pu's';  
And where a *common* feller's jes as good  
As ary other in the neighborhood:  
The World at large don't worry you and me  
Right here at home, boys, where we ort to be!

Right here at home, boys—jes right where we air!—  
Birds don't sing any sweeter anywhere:  
Grass don't grow any greener'n she grows  
Acrost the pastur' where the old path goes,—  
All things in ear-shot's purty, er in sight,  
Right here at home, boys, ef we size 'em right.

Right here at home, boys, where the old home-place  
Is sacerd to us as our mother's face,  
Jes as we rickollect her, last she smiled  
And kissed us—dyin' so, and rickonciled,  
Seein' us all at home here—none astray—  
Right here at home, boys, where she sleeps to-day.

## THE LITTLE FAT DOCTOR

HE seemed so strange to me, every way—  
    In manner, and form, and size,  
From the boy I knew but yesterday,—  
    I could hardly believe my eyes!

To hear his name called over there,  
    My memory thrilled with glee  
And leaped to picture him young and fair  
    In youth, as he used to be.

But looking, only as glad eyes can,  
    For the boy I knew of yore,  
I smiled on a portly little man  
    I had never seen before!—

Grave as a judge in courtliness—  
    Professor-like and bland—  
A little fat doctor and nothing less,  
    With his hat in his kimboed hand.

## THE LITTLE FAT DOCTOR

But how we talked old times, and "chaffed"  
Each other with "Minnie," and "Jim"—  
And how the little fat doctor laughed,  
And how I laughed with him!

"And it's pleasant," I thought, "though I  
yearn to see  
The face of the youth that was,  
To know no boy could smile on me  
As the little fat doctor does!"

## THE SHOEMAKER

THOU Poet, who, like any lark,  
    Dost whet thy beak and trill  
From misty morn till murky dark,  
    Nor ever pipe thy fill:  
Hast thou not, in thy cheery note,  
    One poor chirp to confer—  
One verseful twitter to devote  
    Unto the Shoe-ma-ker?

At early dawn he doth peg in  
    His noble work and brave;  
And eke from cark and worldly sin  
    He seeketh soles to save;  
And all day long, with quip and song,  
    Thus stitcheth he the way  
Our feet may know the right from wrong,  
    Nor ever go a stray.

THE SHOEMAKER

Soak kip in mind the Shoe-ma-ker,  
Nor slight his lasting fame:  
Alway he waxeth tenderer  
In warmth of our acclaim;—  
Ay, more than any artisan  
We glory in his art  
Who ne'er, to help the under man,  
Neglects the upper part.

But toe the mark for him, and heel  
Respond to thee in kine—  
Or kid—or calf, shouldst thou reveal  
A taste so superfine:  
Thus let him jest—join in his laugh—  
Draw on his stock, and be  
A shoer'd there's no rival half-  
Sole liberal as he.

Then, Poet, hail the Shoe-ma-ker  
For all his goodly deeds,—  
Yea, bless him free for booting thee—  
The first of all thy needs!  
And when at last his eyes grow dim,  
And nerveless drops his clamp,  
In golden shoon pray think of him  
Upon his latest tramp.

## THE OLD RETIRED SEA-CAPTAIN

THE old sea-captain has sailed the seas  
So long, that the waves at mirth,  
Or the waves gone wild, and the crests of these,  
Were as near playmates from birth:  
He has loved both the storm and the calm, because  
They seemed as his brothers twain,—  
The flapping sail was his soul's applause,  
And his rapture, the roaring main.

But now—like a battered hulk seems he,  
Cast high on a foreign strand,  
Though he feels “in port,” as it need must be,  
And the stay of a daughter’s hand—  
Yet ever the round of the listless hours,—  
His pipe, in the languid air—  
The grass, the trees, and the garden flowers,  
And the strange earth everywhere!

## THE OLD RETIRED SEA-CAPTAIN

And so betimes he is restless here  
In this little inland town,  
With never a wing in the atmosphere  
But the windmill's, up and down;  
His daughter's home in this peaceful vale,  
And his grandchild 'twixt his knees—  
But never the hail of a passing sail,  
Nor the surge of the angry seas!

He quits his pipe, and he snaps its neck—  
Would speak, though he coughs instead,  
Then paces the porch like a quarter-deck  
With a reeling mast o'erhead!  
Ho! the old sea-captain's cheeks glow warm,  
And his eyes gleam grim and weird,  
As he mutters about, like a thunder-storm,  
In the cloud of his beetling beard.

## ROBERT BURNS WILSON

WHAT intuition named thee?—Through what thrill  
Of the awed soul came the command divine  
Into the mother-heart, foretelling thine  
Should palpitate with his whose raptures will  
Sing on while daisies bloom and lavrocks trill  
Their undulating ways up through the fine  
Fair mists of heavenly reaches? Thy pure line  
Falls as the dew of anthems, quiring still  
The sweeter since the Scottish singer raised  
His voice therein, and, quit of every stress  
Of earthly ache and longing and despair,  
Knew certainly each simple thing he praised  
Was no less worthy, for its lowness,  
Than any joy of all the glory There.

## TO THE SERENADER

TINKLE on, O sweet guitar,  
    Let the dancing fingers  
Loiter where the low notes are  
    Blended with the singer's:  
Let the midnight pour the moon's  
    Mellow wine of glory  
Down upon him through the tune's  
    Old romantic story!

I am listening, my love,  
    Through the cautious lattice,  
Wondering why the stars above  
    All are blinking at us;  
Wondering if his eyes from there  
    Catch the moonbeam's shimmer  
As it lights the robe I wear  
    With a ghostly glimmer.

TO THE SERENADER

Lilt thy song, and lute away  
In the wildest fashion:—  
Pour thy rippling roundelay  
O'er the heights of passion!—  
Flash it down the fretted strings  
Till thy mad lips, missing  
All but smothered whisperings,  
Press this rose I'm kissing.

## THE WIFE-BLESSED

### I

IN youth he wrought, with eyes ablur,  
Lorn-faced and long of hair—  
In youth—in youth he painted her  
A sister of the air—  
Could clasp her not, but felt the stir  
Of pinions everywhere.

### II

She lured his gaze, in braver days,  
And tranced him sirenwise;  
And he did paint her, through a haze  
Of sullen paradise,  
With scars of kisses on her face  
And embers in her eyes.

## THE WIFE-BLESSED

### III

And now—nor dream nor wild conceit—  
Though faltering, as before—  
Through tears he paints her, as is meet,  
Tracing the dear face o'er  
With lilyed patience meek and sweet  
As Mother Mary wore.

## SISTER JONES'S CONFESSION

I THOUGHT the deacon liked me, yit  
I warn't adzackly shore of it—  
Fer, mind ye, time and time ag'in,  
When jiners 'ud be comin' in,  
I'd seed him shakin' hands as free  
With all the sistern as with me!  
But jurin' last Revival, where  
He called on *me* to lead in prayer,  
An' kneeled there with me, side by side,  
A-whisper'n' "he felt sanctified  
Jes tetchin' of my gyarmen't's hem,"—  
That settled things as fur as them—  
Thare *other* wimmin was concerned!—  
And—well!—I know I must 'a' turned  
A dozen colors!—*Flurried?—la!—*  
No mortal sinner never saw  
A gladder widder than the one  
A-kneelin' there and wonderun'  
Who'd pray!—So glad, upon my word,  
I railly couldn't thank the Lord!

## THE CURSE OF THE WANDERING FOOT

ALL hope of rest withdrawn me!—  
What dread command hath put  
This awful curse upon me—  
The curse of the wandering foot?  
Forward and backward and thither,  
And hither and yon again—  
Wandering ever! And whither?  
Answer them, God! Amen.

The blue skies are far o'er me—  
The bleak fields near below:  
Where the mother that bore me?—  
Where her grave in the snow?—  
Glad in her trough of a coffin—  
The sad eyes frozen shut  
That wept so often, often,  
The curse of the wandering foot!

## THE CURSE OF THE WANDERING FOOT

Here in your marts I care not  
Whatsoever ye think.  
Good folk many who dare not  
Give me to eat and drink:  
Give me to sup of your pity—  
Feast me on prayers!—O ye,  
Met I your Christ in the city,  
He would fare forth with me—

Forward and onward and thither,  
And hither again and yon,  
With milk for our drink together  
And honey to feed upon—  
Nor hope of rest withdrawn us,  
Since the one Father put  
The blessed curse upon us—  
The curse of the wandering foot.

## A MONUMENT FOR THE SOLDIERS

A MONUMENT for the Soldiers!

And what will ye build it of?

Can ye build it of marble, or brass, or bronze,

Outlasting the Soldiers' love?

Can ye glorify it with legends

As grand as their blood hath writ

From the inmost shrine of this land of thine

To the outermost verge of it?

And the answer came: We would build it

Out of our hopes made sure,

And out of our purest prayers and tears,

And out of our faith secure:

We would build it out of the great white truths

Their death hath sanctified,

And the sculptured forms of the men in arms,

And their faces ere they died.

## A MONUMENT FOR THE SOLDIERS

And what heroic figures  
Can the sculptor carve in stone?  
Can the marble breast be made to bleed,  
And the marble lips to moan?  
Can the marble brow be fevered?  
And the marble eyes be graved  
To look their last, as the flag floats past,  
On the country they have saved?

And the answer came: The figures  
Shall all be fair and brave,  
And, as befitting, as pure and white  
As the stars above their grave!  
The marble lips, and breast and brow  
Whereon the laurel lies,  
Bequeath us right to guard the flight  
Of the old flag in the skies!

A monument for the Soldiers!  
Built of a people's love,  
And blazoned and decked and panoplied  
With the hearts ye build it of!  
And see that ye build it stately,  
In pillar and niche and gate,  
And high in pose as the souls of those  
It would commemorate!

## THE RIVAL

I so loved once, when Death came by I hid  
    Away my face,  
And all my sweetheart's tresses she undid  
    To make my hiding-place.

The dread shade passed me thus unheeding; and  
    I turned me then  
To calm my love—kiss down her shielding hand  
    And comfort her again.

And lo! she answered not: And she did sit  
    All fixedly,  
With her fair face and the sweet smile of it,  
    In love with Death, not me.

## IRY AND BILLY AND JO

### A TINTYPE

IRY an' Billy an' Jo!—

Iry an' Billy's *the boys*,  
An' Jo's their *dog*, you know,—  
Their pictur's took all in a row.

Bet they kin kick up a noise—  
Iry an' Billy, the boys,  
An' that-air little dog Jo!

*Iry's* the one 'at stands  
Up there a-lookin' so mild  
An' meek—with his hat in his hands,  
Like such a 'bediant child—  
(*Sakes-alive!*)—An' *Billy* he sets  
In the cheer an' holds onto Jo an' *sweats*  
Hisse'f, a-lookin' so good! Ho-ho!  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

Yit the way them boys, you know,  
Usen to jes turn in  
An' fight over that dog Jo  
Wuz a burnin'-shame-an'-a-sin!—

IRY AND BILLY AND JO

Iry *he'd* argy 'at, by gee-whizz!  
That-air little Jo-dog wuz *his!*—  
An' Billy *he'd* claim it wuzn't so—  
'Cause the dog wuz *hisn!*—An' at it they'd go,  
Nip-an'-tugg, tooth-an'-toe-nail, you know—  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

But their Pa—(He wuz the marshal then)—

He 'tended-like 'at he *jerked 'em up*;  
An' got a jury o' Brick-yard men  
An' helt a *trial* about the pup:  
An' *he* says *he* jes like to 'a' died  
When the rest o' us town-boys *testified*—  
Regardin', you know,  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.—

'Cause we all knowed, when *the Gypsies* they  
Camped down here by the crick last Fall,  
They brung Jo with 'em, an' give him away  
To Iry an' Billy fer nothin' at all!—  
So the jury fetched in the *verdick* so  
Jo *he ain't neether o' theirn fer shore*—  
He's *both* their dog, an' jes no more!  
An' so  
They've quit quarrellin' long ago,  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.

## A WRAITH OF SUMMER-TIME

IN its color, shade and shine,  
"Twas a summer warm as wine,  
With an effervescent flavoring of flowered  
    bough and vine,  
And a fragrance and a taste  
Of ripe roses gone to waste,  
And a dreamy sense of sun- and moon- and  
    starlight interlaced.

"Twas a summer such as broods  
O'er enchanted solitudes,  
Where the hand of Fancy leads us through  
    voluptuary moods,  
And with lavish love outpours  
All the wealth of out-of-doors,  
And woos our feet o'er velvet paths and  
    honeysuckle floors.

A WRAITH OF SUMMER-TIME

"Twas a summer-time long dead,—  
And its roses, white and red,  
And its reeds and water-lilies down along  
    the river-bed,—  
O they all are ghostly things—  
For the ripple never sings,  
And the rocking lily never even rustles as it  
    rings!

## HER BEAUTIFUL EYES

O HER beautiful eyes! they are as blue as the dew  
On the violet's bloom when the morning is new,  
And the light of their love is the gleam of the sun  
O'er the meadows of Spring where the quick shadows  
run:  
As the morn shifts the mists and the clouds from the  
skies—  
So I stand in the dawn of her beautiful eyes.

And her beautiful eyes are as mid-day to me,  
When the lily-bell bends with the weight of the bee,  
And the throat of the thrush is a-pulse in the heat,  
And the senses are drugged with the subtle and sweet  
And delirious breaths of the air's lullabies—  
So I swoon in the noon of her beautiful eyes.

## HER BEAUTIFUL EYES

O her beautiful eyes! they have smitten mine own  
As a glory glanced down from the glare of The Throne;  
And I reel, and I falter and fall, as afar  
Fell the shepherds that looked on the mystical Star,  
And yet dazed in the tidings that bade them arise—  
So I grope through the night of her beautiful eyes.

## DOT LEEDLE BOY

Ot's a leedle Gristmas story  
Dot I told der leedle folks—  
Und I vant you stop dot laughin'  
    Und grackin' funny jokes!—  
So help me Peter-Moses!  
    Ot's no time for monkeyshine',  
Ober I vas told you somedings  
    Of dot leedle boy of mine!

Ot vas von cold Vinter vedder,  
    Ven der snow vas all about—  
Dot you have to chop der hatchet  
    Eef you got der sauerkraut!  
Und der cheekens on der hind leg  
    Vas standin' in der shine  
Der sun shmile out dot morning  
    On dot leedle boy of mine.

DOT LEEDLE BOY

He vas yoost a leedle baby  
Not bigger as a doll  
Dot time I got acquaintet—  
Ach! you ought to heard 'im squall!—  
I grackys! dot's der moosic  
Ot make me feel so fine  
Ven first I vas been marriet—  
Oh, dot leedle boy of mine!

He look' yoost like his fader!—  
So, ven der vimmen said,  
“Vot a purty leedle baby!”  
Katrina shake der head. . . .  
I dink she must 'a' notice  
Dot der baby vas a-gryin',  
Und she cover up der blankets  
Of dot leedle boy of mine.

Vel, ven he vas got bigger,  
Dot he grawl und bump his nose,  
Und make der table over,  
Und molasses on his glothes—  
Dot make 'im all der sveeter,—  
So I say to my Katrine,  
“Better you vas quit a-shpankin'  
Dot leedle boy of mine!”

DOT LEEDLE BOY

No more he vas older  
As about a dozen months  
He speak der English language  
Und der German—bote at vonce!  
Und he dringk his glass of lager  
Like a Londsman fon der Rhine—  
Und I klingk my glass togeder  
Mit dot leedle boy of mine!

I vish you could 'a' seen id—  
Ven he glimb up on der chair  
Und shmask der lookin'-glasses  
Ven he try to comb his hair  
Mit a hammer!—Und Katrina  
Say, “Dot's an ugly sign!”  
But I laugh und vink my fingers  
At dot leedle boy of mine.

But vonce, dot Vinter morning,  
He shlip out in der snow  
Mitout no stockin's on 'im.—  
He say he “vant to go  
Und fly some mit der birdies!”  
Und ve give 'im medi-cine  
Ven he catch der “parrygoric”—  
Dot leedle boy of mine!

DOT LEEDLE BOY

Und so I set und nurse 'im,  
Vile der Gristmas vas come roun',  
Und I told 'im 'bout "Kriss Kringle,"  
How he come der chimbly down:  
Und I ask 'im eef he love 'im  
Eef he bring 'im someding fine?  
"Nicht besser as mein fader,"  
Say dot leedle boy of mine.—

Und he put his arms aroun' me  
Und hug so close und tight,  
I hear der gclock a-tickin'  
All der balance of der night! . . .  
Someding make me feel so funny  
Ven I say to my Katrine,  
"Let us go und fill der stockin's  
Of dot leedle boy of mine."

Vell.—Ve buyed a leedle horses  
Dot you pull 'im mit a shtring,  
Und a leedle fancy jay-bird—  
Eef you vant to hear 'im sing  
You took 'im by der topknot  
Und yoost blow in behine—  
Und dot make much *spectakel*  
For dot leedle boy of mine!

DOT LEEDLE BOY

Und gandies, nuts und raizens—  
    Und I buy a leedle drum  
Dot I vant to hear 'im rattle  
    Ven der Gristmas morning come!  
Und a leedle shmall tin rooster  
    Dot vould crow so loud und fine  
Ven he sqveeze 'im in der morning,  
    Dot leedle boy of mine!

Und—vile ve vas a-fixin'—  
    Dot leedle boy vake out!  
I t'ought he been a-dreamin'  
    “Kriss Kringle” vas about,—  
For he say—“*Dot's him!—I see 'im*  
    *Mit der shtars dot make der shine!*”  
Und he yoost keep on a-gryin'—  
    Dot leedle boy of mine,—

Und gottin' vorse und vorser—  
    Und tumble on der bed!  
So—ven der doctor seen id,  
    He kindo' shake his head,  
Und feel his pulse—und visper,  
    “Der boy is a-dyin'.”  
You dink I could *believe* id?—  
    *Dot leedle boy of mine?*

DOT LEEDLE BOY

I told you, friends—dot's someding,  
Der last time dot he speak  
Und say, "*Goot-bye, Kriss Kringle!*"  
—Dot make me feel so veak  
I yoost kneel down und drimble,  
Und bur-sed out a-gryin',  
"*Mein Gott, mein Gott im Himmel!*"—  
*Dot leedle boy of mine!*"

• • • • •

Der sun don't shine *dot Gristmas!*  
. . . Eef dot leedle boy vould *lif'd*—  
No deefer-en'! for *Heaven* vas  
His leedle Gristmas-gift! . . .  
Und der *rooster*, und der *gandy*,  
Und me—und my *Katrine*—  
Und der *jay-bird*—is a-vaiting  
For dot leedle boy of mine.

## DONN PIATT OF MAC-O-CHEE

### I

DONN PIATT—of Mac-o-chee,—  
Not the one of History,  
Who, with flaming tongue and pen,  
Scathes the vanities of men;  
Not the one whose biting wit  
Cuts pretence and etches it  
On the brazen brow that dares  
Filch the laurel that it wears:  
Not the Donn Piatt whose praise  
Echoes in the noisy ways  
Of the faction, onward led  
By the statesman!—But, instead,  
Give the simple man to me,—  
D  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

DONN PIATT OF MAC-O-CHEE

II

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!  
Branches of the old oak-tree,  
Drape him royally in fine  
Purple shade and golden shine!  
Emerald plush of sloping lawn  
Be the throne he sits upon!  
And, O Summer Sunset, thou  
Be his crown, and gild a brow  
Softly smoothed and soothed and calmed  
By the breezes, mellow-palmed  
As Erata's white hand agleam  
On the forehead of a dream.—  
So forever rule o'er me,  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

III

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee:  
Through a lilded memory  
Plays the wayward little creek  
Round thy home at hide-and-seek—  
As I see and hear it, still  
Romping round the wooded hill,

DONN PIATT OF MAC-O-CHEE

Till its laugh-and-babble blends  
With the silence while it sends  
Glances back to kiss the sight,  
In its babyish delight,  
Ere it strays amid the gloom  
Of the glens that burst in bloom  
Of the rarest rhyme for thee,  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

IV

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!  
What a darling destiny  
Has been mine—to meet him there—  
Lolling in an easy-chair  
On the terrace, while he told  
Reminiscences of old—  
Letting my cigar die out,  
Hearing poems talked about;  
And entranced to hear him say  
Gentle things of Thackeray,  
Dickens, Hawthorne, and the rest,  
Known to him as host and guest—  
Known to him as he to me—  
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

## CHAIRLEY BURKE'S IN TOWN

It's Chairley Burke's in town, b'y's! He's down til  
"Jamesy's Place,"  
Wid a bran'-new shave upon 'um, an' the fhwhuskers  
aff his face;  
He's quit the Section-Gang last night, an' yez can chalk  
it down  
There's goin' to be the devil's toime, since Chairley  
Burke's in town.

Ye'll know 'um by the neck av 'um behind—the tan an'  
fair  
The barber left he overfilled before he mowed a hair;  
Ye'll know 'um by the ja'nty hat juist bought he's  
wearin' now—  
But Chairley—*He'll* not miss it in the mornin' onyhow!

It's treatin' iv'ry b'y he is, an' poundin' on the bar  
Till iv'ry man he's dhrinkin' wid musht shmoke a foine  
cigar;

## CHAIRLEY BURKE'S IN TOWN

An' Missus Murphy's little Kate, that's coomin' there for  
beer,  
Can't pay wan cint the bucketful, the whilst that Chair-  
ley's here!

He's joompin' oor the tops av shtools, the both forninsht  
an' back!

He'll lave yez pick the blessed flure, an' walk the straight-  
est crack!

He's liftin' barrels wid his teeth, an' singin' "Garry  
Owen,"

Till all the house be shtrikin' hands, since Chairley  
Burke's in town.

He'll sink the glitther av his eye a-dancin' deep an' dim  
The toime yez tie his hands behind an' thin lave go av  
him!—

An' fwhat's the knots av mortal man ag'insht the nimble  
twisht

An' shlim an' shlender soopleness that *he* have in his  
wrisht!

The Road-Yaird hands coomes dhroppin' in, an' niver  
goin' back;

An' there's two freights upon the switch—the wan on  
aither track—

## CHAIRLEY BURKE'S IN TOWN

An' Mr. Gearry, from The Shops, he's mad enough to  
shwear,

An' durstn't spake a word but grin, the whilst that  
Chairley's there!

Och! Chairley! Chairley! Chairley Burke! ye divil, wid  
yer ways

Av dhrivin' all the throubles aff, these dhark an' ghloomy  
days!

Ohone! that it's meself, wid all the graifs I have to  
dhrown,

Must lave me pick to resht a bit, since Chairley Burke's  
in town.

## THE QUIET LODGER

THE man that rooms next door to me:

Two weeks ago, this very night,  
He took possession quietly,  
As any other lodger might—  
But why the room next mine should so  
Attract him I was vexed to know,—  
Because his quietude, in fine,  
Was far superior to mine.

“Now, I like quiet, truth to tell,  
A tranquil life is sweet to me—  
But *this*,” I sneered, “suits me too well.—  
He shuts his door so noiselessly,  
And glides about so very mute,  
In each mysterious pursuit,  
His silence is oppressive, and  
Too deep for me to understand.”

## THE QUIET LODGER

Sometimes, forgetting book or pen,  
I've found my head in breathless poise  
Lifted, and dropped in shame again,  
Hearing some alien ghost of noise—  
Some smothered sound that seemed to be  
A trunk-lid dropped unguardedly,  
Or the crisp writhings of some quire  
Of manuscript thrust in the fire.

Then I have climbed, and closed in vain  
My transom, opening in the hall;  
Or close against the window-pane  
Have pressed my fevered face,—but all  
The day or night without held not  
A sight or sound or counter-thought  
To set my mind one instant free  
Of this man's silent mastery.

And often I have paced the floor  
With muttering anger, far at night,  
Hearing, and cursing, o'er and o'er,  
The muffled noises, and the light  
And tireless movements of this guest  
Whose silence raged above my rest

## THE QUIET LODGER

Hoarser than howling storms at sea—  
The man that rooms next door to me.

But twice or thrice, upon the stair,  
I've seen his face—most strangely wan,—  
Each time upon me unaware  
He came—smooth'd past me, and was gone.—  
So like a whisper he went by,  
I listened after, ear and eye,  
Nor could my chafing fancy tell  
The meaning of one syllable.

Last night I caught him, face to face,—  
He entering his room, and I  
Glaring from mine: He paused a space  
And met my scowl all shrinkingly,  
But with full gentleness: The key  
Turned in his door—and I could see  
It tremblingly withdrawn and put  
Inside, and then—the door was shut.

Then silence. *Silence!*—why, last night  
The silence was tumultuous,  
And thundered on till broad daylight;—  
O never has it stunned me thus!—

### THE QUIET LODGER

It rolls, and moans, and mumbles yet.—  
Ah, God! how loud may silence get  
When man mocks at a brother man  
Who answers but as silence can!

The silence grew, and grew, and grew,  
Till at high noon to-day 'twas heard  
Throughout the house; and men flocked through  
The echoing halls, with faces blurred  
With pallor, gloom, and fear, and awe,  
And shuddering at what they saw,—  
The quiet lodger, as he lay  
Stark of the life he cast away.

•     •     •     •     •     •     •

So strange to-night—those voices there,  
Where all so quiet was before:  
They say the face has not a care  
Nor sorrow in it any more. . . .  
His latest scrawl:—“Forgive me—You  
Who prayed, ‘They know not what they  
do!’”  
My tears will never let me see  
This man that rooms next door to me!

## THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT

O THE waiting in the watches of the night!  
In the darkness, desolation, and contrition and affright;  
The awful hush that holds us shut away from all  
    delight:  
The ever-weary memory that ever weary goes  
    Recounting ever over every aching loss it knows—  
The ever-weary eyelids gasping ever for repose—  
    In the dreary, weary watches of the night!

Dark—stifling dark—the watches of the night!  
With tingling nerves at tension, how the blackness  
    flashes white  
With spectral visitations smitten past the inner sight!—  
    What shuddering sense of wrongs we've wrought  
        that may not be redressed—  
Of tears we did not brush away—of lips we left  
    unpressed,  
And hands that we let fall, with all their loyalty  
    unguessed!  
Ah! the empty, empty watches of the night!

## THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT

What solace in the watches of the night?—  
What frailest staff of hope to stay—what faintest shaft  
of light?  
Do we *dream*, and dare *believe* it, that by never weight of  
right  
Of our own poor weak deserving, we shall win the  
dawn at last—  
Our famished souls find freedom from this penance  
for the past,  
In a faith that leaps and lightens from the gloom  
that flees aghast—  
Shall we survive the watches of the night?

ONE leads us through the watches of the night—  
By the ceaseless intercession of our loved ones lost to  
sight  
He is with us through all trials, in His mercy and His  
might;—  
With our mothers there about Him, all our sorrow  
disappears,  
Till the silence of our sobbing is the prayer the  
Master hears,  
And His hand is laid upon us with the tenderness of  
tears  
In the waning of the watches of the night.

## HIS VIGIL

CLOSE the book and dim the light,  
I shall read no more to-night.  
No—I am not sleepy, dear—  
Do not go: sit by me here  
In the darkness and the deep  
Silence of the watch I keep.  
Something in your presence so  
Soothes me—as in long ago  
I first felt your hand—as now—  
In the darkness touch my brow:  
I've no other wish than you  
Thus should fold mine eyelids to,  
Saying naught of sigh or tear—  
Just as God were sitting here.

## THE PLAINT HUMAN

SEASON of snows, and season of flowers,  
Seasons of loss and gain!—  
Since grief and joy must alike be ours,  
Why do we still complain?

Ever our failing, from sun to sun,  
O my intolerant brother:—  
We want just a little too little of one,  
And much too much of the other.

## BY ANY OTHER NAME

FIRST the teacher called the roll,  
Clos't to the beginnin',  
“Addeliney Bowersox!”  
Set the school a-grinnin'.  
Winter-time, and stingin'-cold  
When the session took up—  
Cold as *we* all looked at *her*,  
Though *she* couldn't look up!

Total stranger to us, too—  
Country folks ain't allus  
Nigh so shameful unpolite  
As some people call us!—  
But the honest facts is, *then*,  
Addeliney Bower-  
Sox's feelin's was so hurt  
She cried half an hour!

BY ANY OTHER NAME

My dest was acrost from hern:  
    Set and watched her tryin'  
To p'tend she didn't keer,  
    And a kind o' dryin'  
Up her tears with smiles—tel I  
    Thought, "Well, '*Addeliney Bowersox*' is plain, but *she's*  
    Partly as a piney!"

\* \* \* \*

It's be'n many of a year  
    Sence that most oncommon  
Cur'ous name o' *Bowersox*  
    Struck me so abomin-  
Nubble and outlandish-like!—  
    I changed it to Adde-  
*Liney Daubenspeck*—and *that*  
    Nearly killed her Daddy!

## TO AN IMPORTUNATE GHOST

GET gone, thou most uncomfortable ghost!  
Thou really dost annoy me with thy thin  
Impalpable transparency of grin;  
And the vague, shadowy shape of thee almost  
Hath vexed me beyond boundary and coast  
Of my broad patience. Stay thy chattering chin,  
And reel the tauntlings of thy vain tongue in,  
Nor tempt me further with thy vaporish boast  
That I am *helpless* to combat thee! Well,  
Have at thee, then! Yet if a doom most dire  
Thou wouldest escape, flee whilst thou canst!—  
Revile  
Me not, Miasmic Mist!—Rank Air! *retire!*  
One instant longer an thou haunt'st me, I'll  
*Inhale* thee, O thou wraith despicable!

## THE QUARREL

THEY faced each other: Topaz-brown  
And lambent burned her eyes and shot  
Sharp flame at his of amethyst.—  
“I hate you! Go, and be forgot  
As death forgets!” their glitter *hissed*  
(So *seemed* it) in their hatred. Ho!  
Dared any mortal front her so?—  
Tempestuous eyebrows knitted down—  
Tense nostril, mouth—no muscle slack,—  
And black—the suffocating black—  
The stifling blackness of her frown!

Ah! but the lifted face of her!  
And the twitched lip and tilted head!  
Yet he did neither wince nor stir,—  
Only—his hands clinched; and, instead  
Of words, he answered with a stare  
That stammered not in aught it said,  
As might his voice if trusted there.

### THE QUARREL

And what—what spake his steady gaze?—  
Was there a look that harshly fell  
To scoff her?—or a syllable  
Of anger?—or the bitter phrase  
That myrrhs the honey of love's lips,  
Or curdles blood as poison-drips?  
What made their breasts to heave and swell  
As billows under bows of ships  
In broken seas on stormy days?  
We may not know—nor *they* indeed—  
What mercy found them in their need.

A sudden sunlight smote the gloom;  
And round about them swept a breeze,  
With faint breaths as of clover-bloom;  
A bird was heard, through drone of bees,—  
Then, far and clear and eerily,  
A child's voice from an orchard-tree—  
Then laughter, sweet as the perfume  
Of lilacs, could the hearing see.  
And he—O Love! he fed thy name  
On bruised kisses, while her dim  
Deep eyes, with all their inner flame,  
Like drowning gems were turned on him.

## THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW

### I

As one in sorrow looks upon  
The dead face of a loyal friend,  
By the dim light of New Year's dawn  
I saw the Old Year end.

Upon the pallid features lay  
The dear old smile—so warm and bright  
Ere thus its cheer had died away  
In ashes of delight.

The hands that I had learned to love  
With strength of passion half divine,  
Were folded now, all heedless of  
The emptiness of mine.

The eyes that once had shed their bright  
Sweet looks like sunshine, now were dull,

## THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW

And ever lidded from the light  
That made them beautiful.

### II

The chimes of bells were in the air,  
And sounds of mirth in hall and street,  
With pealing laughter everywhere  
And throb of dancing feet:

The mirth and the convivial din  
Of revellers in wanton glee,  
With tunes of harp and violin  
In tangled harmony.

But with a sense of nameless dread,  
I turned me, from the merry face  
Of this newcomer, to my dead;  
And, kneeling there a space,

I sobbed aloud, all tearfully:—  
By this dear face so fixed and cold,  
O Lord, let not this New Year be  
As happy as the old!

## THE HEREAFTER

HEREAFTER! O we need not waste  
Our smiles or tears, whate'er befall:  
No happiness but holds a taste  
Of something sweeter, after all;—  
No depth of agony but feels  
Some fragment of abiding trust,—  
Whatever Death unlocks or seals,  
The mute beyond is just.

## JOHN BROWN

WRIT in between the lines of his life-deed  
We trace the sacred service of a heart  
Answering the Divine command, in every part  
Bearing on human weal: His love did feed  
The loveless; and his gentle hands did lead  
The blind, and lift the weak, and balm the smart  
Of other wounds than rankled at the dart  
In his own breast, that gloried thus to bleed.  
He served the lowliest first—nay, them alone—  
The most despisèd that e'er wreaked vain breath  
In cries of suppliance in the reign whereat  
Red Guilt sate squat upon her spattered throne.—  
For these doomed there it was he went to death.  
God! how the merest man loves one like that!

## A CUP OF TEA

I HAVE sipped, with drooping lashes,  
    Dreamy draughts of Verzenay;  
I have flourished brandy-smashes  
    In the wildest sort of way;  
I have joked with "Tom and Jerry"  
    Till "wee hours ayont the twal"—  
But I've found my tea the very  
    Safest tipple of them all!

'Tis a mystical potation  
    That exceeds in warmth of glow  
And divine exhilaration  
    All the drugs of long ago—  
All of old magicians' potions—  
    Of Medea's philtered spells—  
Or of fabled isles and oceans  
    Where the Lotos-eater dwells!

### A CUP OF TEA

Though I've revelled o'er late lunches  
With blasé dramatic stars,  
And absorbed their wit and punches  
And the fumes of their cigars—  
Drank in the latest story,  
With a cocktail either end,—  
I have drained a deeper glory  
In a cup of tea, my friend.

Green, Black, Moyune, Formosa,  
Congou, Amboy, Pingsuey—  
No odds the name it knows—ah,  
Fill a cup of it for me!  
And, as I clink my china  
Against your goblet's brim,  
My tea in steam shall twine a  
Fragrant laurel round its rim.

## JUDITH

O HER eyes are amber-fine—  
Dark and deep as wells of wine,  
While her smile is like the noon  
Splendor of a day of June.  
If she sorrow—lo! her face  
It is like a flowery space  
In bright meadows, overlaid  
With light clouds and lulled with shade.  
If she laugh—it is the trill  
Of the wayward whippoorwill  
Over upland pastures, heard  
Echoed by the mocking-bird  
In dim thickets dense with bloom  
And blurred cloyings of perfume.  
If she sigh—a zephyr swells  
Over odorous asphodels  
And wan lilies in lush plots  
Of moon-drown'd forget-me-nots.

## JUDITH

Then, the soft touch of her hand—  
Takes all breath to understand  
What to liken it thereto!—  
Never rose-leaf rinsed with dew  
Might slip soother-suave than slips  
Her slow palm, the while her lips  
Swoon through mine, with kiss on kiss  
Sweet as heated honey is.

## THE ARTEMUS OF MICHIGAN

GRAND HAVEN is in Michigan, and in possession, too,  
Of as many rare attractions as our party ever knew:—  
The fine hotel, the landlord, and the lordly bill of fare,  
And the dainty-neat completeness of the pretty waiters  
there;

The touch on the piano in the parlor, and the trill  
Of the exquisite soprano—in our fancy singing still;  
Our cosey room, its comfort, and our thousand grateful  
tho'ts,

And at our door the gentle face

Of

H.

Y.

Potts!

His artless observations, and his drollery of style,  
Bewildered with that sorrowful serenity of smile—  
The eye's elusive twinkle, and the twitching of the lid,  
Like he didn't go to say it and was sorry that he did.  
O Artemus of Michigan! so worthy of the name,  
Our manager indorses it, and Bill Nye does the same,—

THE ARTEMUS OF MICHIGAN

You tickled our affection in so many tender spots  
That even Recollection laughs

At

H.

Y.

Potts!

And hark ye! O Grand Haven! count your rare attractions o'er—

The commerce of your ships at sea, and ships along the shore;

Your railroads, and your industries, and interests untold,

Your Opera-House—our lecture, and the gate-receipts in gold!—

Ay, Banner Town of Michigan! count all your treasures through—

Your crowds of summer tourists, and your Sanitarium, too;

Your lake, your beach, your drives, your breezy groves and grassy plots,

But head the list of all of these  
With

H.

Y.

Potts!

## THE HOODOO

OWNED a pair o' skates onc't.—Traded  
Fer 'em,—stropped 'em on and waded  
Up and down the crick, a-waitin'  
Tel she'd freeze up fit fer skatin'.

Mildest winter I remember—

More like Spring- than Winter-weather!—  
Didn't frost tel 'bout December—

Git up airy, ketch a feather  
Of it, mayby, 'crost the winder—  
Sunshine swinge it like a cinder!

Well—I *waited*—and *kep'* waitin'!

Couldn't see my money's wo'th in  
Them-air skates, and was no skatin'

Ner no hint o' ice ner nothin'!

So, one day—along in airy  
Spring—I swopped 'em off—and barely  
Closed the dicker, 'fore the weather

Natchurly jes slipped the ratchet,  
And crick—tail-race—all together,  
Froze so tight, cat couldn't scratch it!

# THE RIVALS; OR, THE SHOWMAN'S RUSE

A TRAGI-COMEDY, IN ONE ACT

## PERSONS REPRESENTED

BILLY MILLER	}	The Rivals.
JOHNNY WILLIAMS		
TOMMY WELLS		Conspirator.

TIME—Noon. SCENE—Country Town—*Rear view of the Miller Mansion, showing Barn, with practical loft-window opening on alley-way, with colored-crayon poster on wall beneath, announcing:—“BILLY MILLER'S Big Show and Monstur Circus and Equareum! A shour-bath fer Each and All fer 20 pins. This Afternoon! Don't fer git the Date!” Enter TOMMY WELLS and JOHNNY WILLIAMS, who gaze awhile at poster, TOMMY secretly smiling and winking at BILLY MILLER, concealed at loft-window above.*

TOMMY. [To JOHNNY.]

Guess 'at Billy hain't got back,—  
Can't see nothin' through the crack—

THE RIVALS; OR, THE SHOWMAN'S RUSE

Can't hear nothin' neether— No!  
. . . Thinks he's got the dandy show,  
Don't he?

JOHNNY. [Scornfully.]

'Course! but what *I* care?—  
He hain't got no show in there!—  
What's *he* got in there but that  
Old hen, cooped up with a cat  
An' a turkle, an' that thing  
'At he calls his "circus-ring"?  
*What a "circus-ring!" I'd quit!*  
Bet *mine's* twic't as big as it!

TOMMY.

Yes, but *you* got no machine  
W'at you bathe with, painted green,  
With a string to work it, guess!

JOHNNY. [Contemptuously.]

Folks don't *bathe* in *circuses*!—  
*Ladies* comes to *mine*, you bet!  
I' got seats where *girls* can set;  
An' a dressin'-room, an' all,  
Fixed up in my pony's stall—

THE RIVALS; OR, THE SHOWMAN'S RUSE,

Yes, an' I' got *carpet*, too,  
Fer the tumblers, an' a blue  
Centre-pole!

TOMMY.

Well, Billy, he's  
Got a tight-rope an' trapeze,  
An' a hoop 'at he jumps through  
Head-first!

JOHNNY.

Well, what's *that* to do—  
Lightin' on a pile o' hay?  
Hain't no *actin'* thataway!

TOMMY.

Don't care what you say, he draws  
Bigger crowds than you do, 'cause  
Sence he started up, I know  
All the fellers says his show  
Is the best-un!

JOHNNY.

Yes, an' he  
Better not tell things on me!

## THE RIVALS; OR, THE SHOWMAN'S RUSE

His old circus hain't no good!—  
'Cause he's got the neighborhood  
Down on me he thinks 'at I'm  
Goin' to stand it all the time;  
Thinks ist 'cause my Pa don't 'low  
Me to fight, he's got me now,  
An' can say I lie, an' call  
Me ist anything at all!  
Billy Miller thinks I am  
'Feard to say 'at he says "dam"—  
Yes, an' *worser* ones! an' I'm  
Goin' to tell his folks sometime!—  
An' ef he don't shet his head  
I'll tell worse 'an *that* he said  
When he fighted Willie King—  
An' got licked like ever'thing!—  
Billy Miller better shin  
Down his Daddy's lane ag'in,  
Like a cowardy-calf, an' climb  
In fer home another time!  
Better—

[Here BILLY leaps down from the loft upon his unsuspecting victim; and two minutes later, JOHNNY, with the half of a straw hat, a bleeding nose, and a straight rent across one trouser-knee, makes his inglorious—exit.]

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

WINTER-TIME, er Summer-time,  
Of late years I notice I'm,  
Kindo'-like, more subjec' to  
What the *weather* is. Now, *you*  
Folks 'at lives in *town*, I s'pose,  
Thinks it's bully when it snows;  
But the chap 'at chops and hauls  
Yer wood fer ye, and then stalls,  
And snapps tuggs and swingletrees,  
And then has to walk er freeze,  
Hain't so much "stuck *on*" the snow  
As stuck *in* it—Bless ye, no!—  
When it's packed, and sleighin's good,  
And *church* in the neighborhood,  
Them 'at's *got* their girls, I guess,  
Takes 'em, likely, more er less.  
Tell the plain fac's o' the case,  
No men-folks about our place

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

On'y me and Pap—and he  
'Lows 'at young folks' company  
Allus made him sick! So I  
Jes don't want, and jes don't try!  
Chinkypin, the dad-burn town,  
'S too fur off to loaf aroun'  
Eether day er night—and no  
Law compellin' me to go!—  
'Less 'n some Old-Settlers' Day,  
Er big-doin's thataway—  
*Then*, to tell the p'inted fac',  
I've went more so's to come back  
By old Guthrie's still-house, where  
Minors *has* got licker there—  
That's pervidin' we could show 'em  
Old folks sent fer it from home!  
Visit roun' the neighbors some,  
When the *boys* wants me to come.—  
Coon-hunt with 'em; er set traps  
Fer mussrats; er jes, perhaps,  
Lay in roun' the stove, you know,  
And parch corn, and let her snow!  
Mostly, nights like these, you'll be  
(Ef you' got a writ fer *me*)  
Ap' to skeer me up, I guess,  
In about the Wigginses'.

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

Nothin' roun' *our* place to keep  
Me at home—with Pap asleep  
'Fore it's dark; and Mother in  
Mango pickles to her chin;  
And the girls, all still as death,  
Piecin' quilts.—Sence I drawed breath  
Twenty year' ago, and heerd  
Some girls whisper'n' so's it 'peared  
Like they had a row o' pins  
In their mouth—right there begins  
My first rickollections, built  
On that-air blame' old piece-quilt!

Summer-time, it's jes the same—  
'Cause I've noticed,—and I claim,  
As I said afore, I'm more  
Subjec' to the weather, *shore*,  
'Proachin' my majority,  
Than I ever ust to be!  
Callin' back *last* Summer, say,—  
Don't seem hardly past away—  
With night closin' in, and all  
S' lonesome-like in the dewfall:  
Bats—ad-drat their ugly muggs!—  
Flicker'n' by; and lightnin'-bugs

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

Huckster'n' roun' the airy night  
Little sickly gasps o' light;—  
Whippoorwills, like all possess'd,  
Moanin' out their mournfullest;—  
Frogs and katydids and things  
Jes *clubs* in and sings and sings  
Their *ding-dangdest!*—Stock's all fed,  
And Pap's warshed his feet fer bed;—  
Mother and the girls all down  
At the milk-shed, foolin' roun'—  
No wunder 'at I git blue,  
And lite out—and so would you!  
I cain't stay aroun' no place  
Whur they hain't no livin' face:—  
'Crost the fields and thue the gaps  
Of the hills they's friends, perhaps,  
Waitin' somers, 'at kin be  
Kindo' comfortin' to me!

Neighbors all is plenty good,  
Scattered thue this neighborhood;  
Yit, of all, I like to jes  
Drap in on the Wigginses.—  
Old man, and old lady too,  
'Pear-like, makes so much o' you—

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

Least, they've allus pampered me  
Like one of the fambily.—  
The boys, too, 's all thataway—  
Want you jes to come and stay;—  
Price, and Chape, and Mandaville,  
Poke, Chasteen, and "Catfish Bill"—  
Poke's the runt of all the rest,  
But he's jes the beatin'est  
Little schemer, fer fourteen,  
Anybody ever seen!—  
"Like his namesake," old man claims,  
"Jeems K. Poke, the first o' names!  
Full o' tricks and jokes—and you  
Never know what *Poke's* go' do!"  
*Genius*, too, that-air boy is,  
With them awk'ard hands o' his:  
Gits this blame' pokeberry-juice,  
Er some stuff, fer ink—and goose-  
Quill pen-p'ints: And then he'll draw  
Dogdest pictures yevver saw!—  
Jes make deers and eagles good  
As a writin'-teacher could!  
Then they's two twin boys they've riz  
Of old Coonrod Wigginses  
'At's deceast—and glad of it,  
'Cause his widder's livin' yit!

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

'Course *the boys* is mostly jes  
Why I go to Wigginses'.—  
Though *Melviney*, sometimes, *she*  
Gits her slate and algebra  
And jes sets there cipher'n' thue  
Sums old Ray hisse'f cain't do!—  
Jes sets there, and tilts her chair  
Forreds tel, 'pear-like, her hair  
Jes *spills* in her lap—and then  
She jes dips it up again  
With her hands, as white, I swan,  
As the apern she's got on!

Talk o' hospitality!—  
Go to Wigginses' with me—  
Overhet, or froze plum thue,  
You'll find welcome waitin' you:—  
Th'ow out yer tobacker 'fore  
You set foot acrost that floor,—  
“Got to eat whatever's set—  
Got to drink whatever's wet!”  
Old man's sentimuns—them's his—  
And means jes the best they is!  
Then he lights his pipe; and she,  
The old lady, presen'ly

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

She lights hern; and Chape and Poke.—  
I hain't got none, ner don't smoke,—  
(In the crick afore their door—  
Sorto' so's 'at I'd be shore—  
Drownded mine one night and says  
“I won't smoke at *Wiggenses'!*”)  
Price he's mostly talkin' 'bout  
Politics, and “thieves turned out”—  
What he's go' to be, ef he  
Ever “gits there”—and “we'll see!”—  
Poke he 'lows they's blame' few men  
Go' to hold their breath tel then!  
Then Melviney smiles, as she  
Goes on with her algebry,  
And the clouds clear, and the room's  
Sweeter 'n crabapple-blooms!  
(That Melviney, she' got some  
Most surprisin' ways, i gum!—  
Don't 'pear-like she ever *says*  
Nothin', yit you'll *listen* jes  
Like she *was* a-talkin', and  
Half-way seem to understand,  
But not quite,—*Poke* does, I know,  
'Cause he good as told me so,—  
*Poke's* *her* favo-rite; and he—  
That is, confidentially—

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

He's *my* favo-rite—and I  
Got my whurfore and my why!)

I hain't never be'n no hand  
Much at talkin', understand,  
But they's *thoughts* o' mine 'at's jes  
Jealous o' them Wigginses!—  
Gift o' talkin' 's what they' got,  
Whuther they want to er not.—  
F'r instunce, start the old man on  
Huntin'-scrapes, 'fore game was gone,  
'Way back in the Forties, when  
Bears stold pigs right out the pen,  
Er went waltzin' 'crost the farm  
With a beehive on their arm!—  
And—sir, *ping!* the old man's gun  
Has plumped over many a one,  
Firin' at him from afore  
That-air very cabin door!  
Yes—and *painters*, prowlin' 'bout,  
Allus darkest nights.—Lay out  
Clost yer cattle.—Great, big red  
Eyes a-blazin' in their head,  
Glitter'n' 'long the timber-line—  
Shine out some, and then *un-shine*,

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

And shine back—Then, stiddy! *whizz!*  
'N' there yer Mr. Painter is  
With a hole bored spang between  
Them-air eyes! . . . Er start Chasteen,  
Say, on blooded racin'-stock,  
Ef you want to hear him talk;  
Er tobacker—how to raise,  
Store, and k-yore it, so's she pays. . . .  
The old lady—and she'll cote  
Scriptur' tel she'll git yer vote!  
Prove to you 'at wrong is right,  
Jes as plain as black is white:  
Prove when you're asleep in bed  
You're a-standin' on yer head,  
And yer train 'at's goin' West,  
'S goin' East its level best;  
And when bees dies, it's their wings  
Wears out—And a thousan' things!  
And the boys is "chips," you know,  
"Off the old block"—So I go  
To the Wigginses', 'cause—jes  
'Cause I *like* the Wigginses—  
Even ef Melviney *she*  
Hardly 'pears to notice me!

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

Rid to Chinkypin this week—  
Yisterd'y.—No snow to speak  
Of, and didn't have no sleigh  
Anyhow; so, as I say,  
I rid in—and froze one ear  
And both heels—and I don't keer!—  
“Mother and the girls kin jes  
Bother 'bout their Chris'mases  
*Next time fer theirse'v's, i jack!*”  
Thinks-says-I, a-startin' back,—  
Whole durn meal-bag full of things  
Wropped in paper sacks, and strings  
Liable to snap their holt  
Jes at any little jolt!  
That in front o' me, and *wind*  
With *nicks* in it, 'at jes skinned  
Me alive!—I'm here to say  
Nine mile' hossback thataway  
Would 'a' walked my log! But, as  
Somepin' allus comes to pass,  
As I topped old Guthrie's hill,  
Saw a buggy, front the Still,  
P'inted home'ards, and a thin  
Little chap jes climbin' in.

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

Six more minutes I were there  
On the groun's!—And 'course it were—  
It were little Poke—and he  
Nearly fainted to see *me!*—  
“You be'n in to Chinky, too?”  
“Yes; and go' ride back with you,”  
I-says-I. He he'pped me find  
Room fer my things in behind—  
Stript my hoss's reins down, and  
Putt his mitt' on the right hand  
So's to lead—“Pile in!” says he,  
“But you've struck pore company!”  
Noticed he was pale—looked sick,  
Kindo'-like, and had a quick  
Way o' flickin' them-air eyes  
O' his roun' 'at didn't size  
Up right with his usual style—  
S' I, “You *well?*” He tried to smile,  
But his chin shuck and tears come.—  
“*I've run 'Viney 'way from home!*”

Don't know jes what all occurred  
Next ten seconds—Nary word,  
But my heart jes drapt, stobbed thue,  
And whirlt over and come to.—

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

Wrenched a big quart-bottle from  
That fool-boy!—and cut my thumb  
On his little fiste-teeth—helt  
Him snug in one arm, and felt  
That-air little heart o' his  
Churn the blood o' Wigginses  
Into that old bead 'at spun  
Roun' her, spilt at Lexington!  
His k'niptions, like enough,  
He'pped us both,—though it was rough—  
Rough on him, and rougher on  
Me when, last his nerve was gone  
And he laid there still, his face  
Fishin' fer some hidin'-place  
Jes a leetle lower down  
In my breast than he'd yit foun'!  
Last I kindo' soothed him, so's  
He could talk.— And what you s'pose  
Them-air revelations of  
Poke's was? . . . He'd be'n writin' love-  
Letters to Melviney, and  
Givin' her to understand  
They was from “a young man who  
Loved her,” and—“the violet's blue  
'N' sugar's sweet”—and Lord knows what!  
Tel, 'peared-like, Melviney got

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

S' interested in "the young  
Man," Poke *he* says, 'at she brung  
A' answer onc't fer him to take,  
Statin' "she'd die fer his sake,"  
And writ fifty x's "fer  
Love-kisses fer him from her!" . . .  
I was standin' in the road  
By the buggy, all I knowed  
When Poke got that fur.—"That's why,"  
Poke says, "I 'fessed up the lie—  
*Had* to—'cause I see," says he,  
"'Viney was in *airnest*—she  
*Cried*, too, when I told her.—Then  
She swore me, and smiled again,  
And got Pap and Mother to  
Let me hitch and drive her thue  
Into Chinkypin, to be  
At Aunt 'Rindy's Chris'mas-tree—  
That's to-night." Says I, "Poke—durn  
Your lyin' soul!—'s that beau o' hern—  
That—*she*—loves—Does *he* live in  
That hell-hole o' Chinkypin?"  
"No," says Poke, "er 'Viney would  
Went some *other* neighborhood."  
"Who is the blame' whelp?" says I.  
"Promised 'Viney, hope I'd die

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

Ef I ever told!" says Poke,  
Pittiful and jes heartbroke'—  
“ ‘Sides that’s why she left the place,—  
‘She cain’t look him in the face  
Now no more on earth!’ she says.”—  
And the child broke down and jes  
Sobbed! . . . Says I, “ Poke, I p’tend  
T’ be *your* friend, and your *Pap*’s friend,  
And your *Mother*’s friend, and all  
The *boys*’ friend, little, large and small—  
The *whole fambily*’s friend—and you  
Know that means *Melviney*, too.—  
Now—you hursh yer troublin’!—I’m  
Go’ to he’p friends ever’ time—  
On’y in *this* case, *you* got  
To he’p *me*—and, like as not,  
I kin he’p *Melviney* then,  
And we’ll have her home again.  
And now, Poke, with your consent,  
I’m go’ go to that-air gent  
She’s in love with, and confer  
With *him* on his views o’ *her*.—  
Blast him! give the man *some* show.—  
Who *is* he?—*I’m go’ to know!*”  
Somepin’ struck the little chap  
Funny, ’peared-like —Give a slap

## WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

On his leg—laughed thue the dew  
In his eyes, and says: "*It's you!*"

Yes, and—'cordin' to the last  
Love-letters of ours 'at passed  
Thue his hands—we was to be  
Married Chris'mas.—“Gee-mun-nee!  
Poke,” says I, “it's *sudden*—yit  
We *kin* make it! You're to git  
Up to-morry, say, 'bout *three*—  
Tell your folks you're go' with me:—  
We'll hitch up, and jes drive in  
'N' *take* the town o' Chinkypin!”

## GO, WINTER!

Go, Winter! Go thy ways! We want again  
The twitter of the bluebird and the wren;  
Leaves ever greener growing, and the shine  
Of Summer's sun—not thine.—

Thy sun, which mocks our need of warmth and love  
And all the heartening fervencies thereof,  
It scarce hath heat enow to warm our thin  
Pathetic yearnings in.

So get thee from us! We are cold, God wot,  
Even as *thou* art.—We remember not  
How blithe we hailed thy coming.—That was O  
Too long—too long ago!

Get from us utterly! Ho! Summer then  
Shall spread her grasses where thy snows have been,  
And thy last icy footprint melt and mould  
In her first marigold.

## ELIZABETH

*May 1, 1891*

### I.

ELIZABETH! Elizabeth!  
The first May-morning whispereth  
Thy gentle name in every breeze  
That lisbeth through the young-leaved trees,  
New raimented in white and green  
Of bloom and leaf to crown thee queen;—  
And, as in odorous chorus, all  
The orchard-blossoms sweetly call  
Even as a singing voice that saith,  
Elizabeth! Elizabeth!

### II

Elizabeth! Lo, lily-fair,  
In deep, cool shadows of thy hair,  
Thy face maintaineth its repose.—  
Is it, O sister of the rose,

## ELIZABETH

So better, sweeter, blooming thus  
Than in this briery world with us?—  
Where frost o'ertaketh, and the breath  
Of biting winter harrieth  
With sleeted rains and blighting snows  
All fairest blooms—Elizabeth!

## III

Nay, then!—So reign, Elizabeth,  
Crowned, in thy May-day realm of death!  
Put forth the sceptre of thy love  
In every star-tipped blossom of  
The grassy dais of thy throne!  
Sadder are we, thus left alone,  
But gladder they that thrill to see  
Thy mother's rapture, greeting thee.  
Bereaved are we by life—not death—  
Elizabeth! Elizabeth!

## SLEEP

ORPHANED, I cry to thee:  
Sweet Sleep! O kneel and be  
A mother unto me!

Calm thou my childish fears:  
Fold—fold mine eyelids to, all tenderly,  
And dry my tears.

Come, Sleep, all drowsy-eyed  
And faint with languor,—slide  
Thy dim face down beside  
Mine own, and let me rest  
And nestle in thy heart, and there abide,  
A favored guest.

Good night to every care,  
And shadow of despair!  
Good night to all things where  
Within is no delight!—  
Sleep opens her dark arms, and, swooning  
there,  
I sob: Good night—good night!

## DAN PAINÉ

OLD friend of mine, whose chiming name  
Has been the burthen of a rhyme  
Within my heart since first I came  
To know thee in thy mellow prime:  
With warm emotions in my breast  
That can but coldly be expressed,  
And hopes and wishes wild and vain,  
I reach my hand to thee, Dan Paine.

In fancy, as I sit alone  
In gloomy fellowship with care,  
I hear again thy cheery tone,  
And wheel for thee an easy-chair;  
And from my hand the pencil falls—  
My book upon the carpet sprawls,  
As eager soul and heart and brain  
Leap up to welcome thee, Dan Paine.

DAN PAIN

A something gentle in thy mien,  
A something tender in thy voice,  
Has made my trouble so serene,  
I can but weep, from very choice.  
And even then my tears, I guess,  
Hold more of sweet than bitterness,  
And more of gleaming shine than rain,  
Because of thy bright smile, Dan Paine.

The wrinkles that the years have spun  
And tangled round thy tawny face,  
Are kinked with laughter, every one,  
And fashioned in a mirthful grace.  
And though the twinkle of thine eyes  
Is keen as frost when Summer dies,  
It cannot long as frost remain  
While thy warm soul shines out, Dan Paine.

And so I drain a health to thee:—  
May merry Joy and jolly Mirth  
Like children clamber on thy knee,  
And ride thee round the happy earth!  
And when, at last, the hand of Fate  
Shall lift the latch of Canaan's gate,  
And usher me in thy domain,  
Smile on me just as now, Dan Paine.

## OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM

I HAVE jest about decided  
It 'ud keep a *town-boy* hoppin'  
Fer to work all winter, choppin'  
Fer a' old fireplace, like *I* did!  
Lawz! them old times wuz contrairy!—  
Blame' backbone o' winter, 'peared-like,  
*Wouldn't* break!—and I wuz skeerd-like  
Clean on into *Feb'uary*!  
Nothin' ever made me madder  
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'  
On a' extry forestick, sayin',  
“ Groun'-hog's out and seed his shadder!”

## AT UTTER LOAF

### I

AN afternoon as ripe with heat  
As might the golden pippin be  
With mellowness if at my feet  
It dropped now from the apple-tree  
My hammock swings in lazily.

### II

The boughs about me spread a shade  
That shields me from the sun, but weaves  
With breezy shuttles through the leaves  
Blue rifts of skies, to gleam and fade  
Upon the eyes that only see  
Just of themselves, all drowsily.

### III

Above me drifts the fallen skein  
Of some tired spider, looped and blown,  
As fragile as a strand of rain,

## AT UTTER LOAF

Across the air, and upward thrown  
By breaths of hay-fields newly mown—  
So glimmering it is and fine,  
I doubt these drowsy eyes of mine.

### IV

Far-off and faint as voices pent  
In mines, and heard from underground,  
Come murmurs as of discontent,  
And clamorings of sullen sound  
The city sends me, as, I guess,  
To vex me, though they do but bless  
Me in my drowsy fastnesses.

### V

I have no care. I only know  
My hammock hides and holds me here  
In lands of shade a prisoner:  
While lazily the breezes blow  
Light leaves of sunshine over me,  
And back and forth and to and fro  
I swing, enwrapped in some hushed glee,  
Smiling at all things drowsily.

## A LOUNGER

HE leaned against a lamp-post, lost  
In some mysterious reverie:  
His head was bowed; his arms were crossed;  
He yawned, and glanced evasively:  
Uncrossed his arms, and slowly put  
Them back again, and scratched his side—  
Shifted his weight from foot to foot,  
And gazed out no-ward, idle-eyed.

Grotesque of form and face and dress,  
And picturesque in every way—  
A figure that from day to day  
Drooped with a limper laziness;  
A figure such as artists lean,  
In pictures where distress is seen,  
Against low hovels where we guess  
No happiness has ever been.

## A SONG OF LONG AGO

A SONG of Long Ago:

Sing it lightly—sing it low—

Sing it softly—like the lisping of the lips  
we used to know

When our baby-laughter spilled

From the glad hearts ever filled

With music blithe as robin ever trilled!

Let the fragrant summer breeze,

And the leaves of locust-trees,

And the apple-buds and -blossoms, and the  
wings of honey-bees,

All palpitate with glee,

Till the happy harmony

Brings back each childish joy to you and me.

Let the eyes of fancy turn

Where the tumbled pippins burn

Like embers in the orchard's lap of tangled  
grass and fern,—

### A SONG OF LONG AGO

There let the old path wind  
In and out, and on behind  
The cider-press that chuckles as we grind.

Blend in the song the moan  
Of the dove that grieves alone,  
And the wild whir of the locust, and the  
    bumble's drowsy drone;  
And the low of cows that call  
Through the pasture-bars when all  
The landscape fades away at evenfall.

Then, far away and clear,  
Through the dusky atmosphere,  
Let the wailing of the killdee be the only  
    sound we hear:  
O sad and sweet and low  
As the memory may know  
Is the glad-pathetic song of Long Ago!

## THE CHANT OF THE CROSS-BEARING CHILD

I BEAR dis cross dis many a mile.  
O de cross-bearin' chile—  
De cross-bearin' chile!

I bear dis cross 'long many a road  
Wha' de pink ain't bloom' an' de grass done mowed.  
O de cross-bearin' chile—  
De cross-bearin' chile!

Hit's on my conscience all dese days  
Fo' ter bear de cross 'ut de good Lord lays  
On my po' soul, an' ter lif' my praise.  
O de cross-bearin' chile—  
De cross-bearin' chile!

I's nigh-'bout weak ez I mos' kin be,  
Yit de Marstah call an' He say,—“ You's free

## THE CHANT OF THE CROSS-BEARING CHILD

Fo' ter 'cept dis cross, an' ter cringe yo' knee  
To no n'er man in de worl' but Me!"

O de cross-bearin' chile—

De cross-bearin' chile!

Says you guess wrong, ef I let you guess—  
Says you 'spec' mo', an'-a you git less:—  
Says you go eas', says you go wes',  
An' whense you fine de road 'ut you like bes'  
You betteh take ch'ice er any er de res'!

O de cross-bearin' chile—

De cross-bearin' chile!

He build my feet, an' He fix de signs  
Dat de shoe hit pinch an' de shoe hit bines  
Ef I on'y w'ah eights an'-a wanter w'ah nines;  
I hone fo' de rain, an' de sun hit shines,  
An' whilse I hunt de sun, hit's de rain I fines.—  
O-a trim my lamp, an'-a gyrd my lines!

O de cross-bearin' chile—

De cross-bearin' chile!

I wade de wet, an' I walk de dry:  
I done tromp long, an' I done clim' high;  
An' I pilgrim on ter de jasper sky,

THE CHANT OF THE CROSS-BEARING CHILD

An' I taken de resk fo' ter cas' my eye  
Wha' de Gate swing wide an' de Lord draw nigh,  
An' de Trump hit blow, an' I hear de cry,—  
“ You lay dat cross down by an' by!—  
O de Cross-bearin' Chile—  
De Cross-bearin' Chile!”

## THANKSGIVING

LET us be thankful—not only because  
Since last our universal thanks were told  
We have grown greater in the world's applause,  
And fortune's newer smiles surpass the old—

But thankful for all things that come as alms  
From out the open hand of Providence:—  
The winter clouds and storms—the summer calms—  
The sleepless dread—the drowse of indolence.

Let us be thankful—thankful for the prayers  
Whose gracious answers were long, long delayed,  
That they might fall upon us unawares,  
And bless us, as in greater need we prayed.

Let us be thankful for the loyal hand  
That love held out in welcome to our own,  
When love and *only* love could understand  
The need of touches we had never known.

## THANKSGIVING

Let us be thankful for the longing eyes  
That gave their secret to us as they wept,  
Yet in return found, with a sweet surprise,  
Love's touch upon their lids, and, smiling, slept.

And let us, too, be thankful that the tears  
Of sorrow have not all been drained away,  
That through them still, for all the coming years,  
We may look on the dead face of To-day.

## AUTUMN

As a harvester, at dusk,  
Faring down some woody trail  
Leading homeward through the musk  
Of May-apple and pawpaw,  
Hazel-bush, and spice and haw,—  
So comes Autumn, swart and hale,  
Drooped of frame and slow of stride,  
But withal an air of pride  
Looming up in stature far  
Higher than his shoulders are;  
Weary both in arm and limb,  
Yet the wholesome heart of him  
Sheer at rest and satisfied.

Greet him as with glee of drums  
And glad cymbals, as he comes!  
Robe him fair, O Rain and Shine!  
He the Emperor—the King—  
Royal lord of everything

AUTUMN

Sagging Plenty's granary floors  
And out-bulging all her doors;  
He the god of corn and wine,  
Honey, milk, and fruit and oil—  
Lord of feast, as lord of toil—  
Jocund host of yours and mine!

Ho! the revel of his laugh!—  
Half is sound of winds, and half  
Roar of ruddy blazes drawn  
Up the throats of chimneys wide,  
Circling which, from side to side,  
Faces—lit as by the Dawn,  
With her highest tintings on  
Tip of nose, and cheek, and chin—  
Smile at some old fairy tale  
Of enchanted lovers, in  
Silken gown and coat of mail,  
With a retinue of elves  
Merry as their very selves,  
Trooping ever, hand in hand,  
Down the dales of Wonderland.

Then the glory of his song!—  
Lifting up his dreamy eyes—  
Singing haze across the skies;

## AUTUMN

Singing clouds that trail along  
Towering tops of trees that seize  
Tufts of them to stanch the breeze;  
Singing slanted strands of rain  
In between the sky and earth,  
For the lyre to mate the mirth  
And the might of his refrain:  
Singing southward-flying birds  
Down to us, and afterwards  
Singing them to flight again:  
Singing blushes to the cheeks  
Of the leaves upon the trees—  
Singing on and changing these  
Into pallor, slowly wrought,  
Till the little, moaning creeks  
Bear them to their last farewell,  
As Elaine, the lovable,  
Was borne down to Lancelot.—  
Singing drip of tears, and then  
Drying them with smiles again.

Singing apple, peach and grape,  
Into roundest, plumpest shape;  
Rosy ripeness to the face  
Of the pippin; and the grace

## AUTUMN

Of the dainty stamen-tip  
To the huge bulk of the pear,  
Pendent in the green caress  
Of the leaves, and glowing through  
With the tawny laziness  
Of the gold that Ophir knew,—  
Haply, too, within its rind  
Such a cleft as bees may find,  
Bungling on it half aware,  
And wherein to see them sip,  
Fancy lifts an oozy lip,  
And the singer's falter there.

Sweet as swallows swimming through  
Eddyings of dusk and dew,  
Singing happy scenes of home  
Back to sight of eager eyes  
That have longed for them to come,  
Till their coming is surprise  
Uttered only by the rush  
Of quick tears and prayerful hush:  
Singing on, in clearer key,  
Hearty palms of you and me  
Into grasps that tingle still  
Rapturous, and ever will!

## AUTUMN

Singing twank and twang of strings—  
Trill of flute and clarinet  
In a melody that rings  
Like the tunes we used to play,  
And our dreams are playing yet!  
Singing lovers, long astray,  
Each to each; and, sweeter things,—  
Singing in their marriage-day,  
And a banquet holding all  
These delights for festival.

## THE TWINS

ONE'S the pictur' of his Pa,  
And the *other* of her Ma—  
Jes the bossest pair o' babies 'at a mortal  
ever saw!

And we love 'em as the bees  
Loves the blossoms on the trees,  
A-ridin' and a-rompin' in the breeze!

One's got her Mammy's eyes—  
Soft and blue as Apurl-skies—  
With the same sort of a *smile*, like—Yes, and  
mouth about her size,—  
Dimples, too, in cheek and chin,  
'At my lips jes *wallers* in,  
A-goin' to work, er gittin' home ag'in.

And the *other*—Well, they say  
That he's got his Daddy's way

## THE TWINS

O' bein' ruther soberfied, er ruther extry  
    gay,—

That he eether cries his best,  
Er he laughs his howlin'est—  
Like all he lacked was buttons and a vest!

Look at *her*!—and look at *him*!—

Talk about yer “Cheru-*bim*!”

Roll 'em up in dreams together, rosy arm and  
    chubby limb!

O we love 'em as the bees

Loves the blossoms on the trees,

A-ridin' and a-rompin' in the breeze!

## BEDOUIN

O LOVE is like an untamed steed!—  
So hot of heart and wild of speed,  
And with fierce freedom so in love,  
The desert is not vast enough,  
With all its leagues of glimmering sands,  
To pasture it! Ah, that my hands  
Were more than human in their strength,  
That my deft lariat at length  
Might safely noose this splendid thing  
That so defies all conquering!  
Ho! but to see it whirl and reel—  
The sands spurt forward—and to feel  
The quivering tension of the thong  
That throned me high, with shriek and song!  
To grapple tufts of tossing mane—  
To spurn it to its feet again,  
And then, sans saddle, rein or bit,  
To lash the mad life out of it!

## TUGG MARTIN

### I

TUGG MARTIN'S tough.—No doubt o' that!

And down there at  
The camp he come from word's bin sent  
Advisin' this-here Settle-ment  
To kindo' *humor* Tugg, and not  
To git him hot.—  
Jest pass his imperfections by,  
And he's as good as pie!

### II

They claim he's *wanted* back there.—Yit  
The officers they mostly quit  
*Insistin'* when  
They notice Tugg's so *back'ard*, and  
Sorto' gives 'em to understand  
He'd ruther not!—A Deputy  
(The slickest one you ever see!)

## TUGG MARTIN

Tackled him *last*—“disguisin’ then,”  
As Tugg says, “as a *gentleman!*”—  
You’d ort’o hear *Tugg* tell it!—*My!*  
I thought I’d *die!*

## III

The way it wuz:—Tugg and the rest  
The boys wuz jest  
A-kind o’ gittin’ thawed out, down  
At “Guss’s Place,” fur-end o’ town,  
One night,—when, first we knowed,  
Some feller rode  
Up in a buggy at the door,  
And hollered fer some one to come  
And fetch him some  
Red-licker out—And whirped and swore  
That colt he drove wuz “*Thompson’s!*”—shore!

## IV

Guss went out, and come in ag’in  
And filled a pint and tuk it out—  
Stayed quite a spell—then peeked back in,  
Half-hid-like where the light wuz dim,

TUGG MARTIN

And jieuked his head  
At Tugg and said,—  
“Come out a minute—here’s a gent  
Wants you to take a drink with him.”

V

Well—Tugg laid down his cards and went—  
In fact, *we all*  
Got up, you know,  
*Startin’ to go—*  
When in reels Guss ag’inst the wall,  
As white as snow,  
Gaspin’,—“*He’s tuk Tugg!—Wher’s my gun?*”  
And-sir, outside we heerd  
The hoss snort and kick up his heels  
Like he wuz skeerd,  
And then the buggy-wheels  
Scrape—and then *Tugg’s* voice hollerun,—  
“*I’m bested!—Good-bye, fellers!*” . . . ’Peared  
S’ all-fired suddent,  
Nobody couldn’t  
Jest git it fixed,—tel hoss and man,  
Buggy and Tugg, off through the dark  
Went like the devil beatin’ tan-  
Bark!

VI

What could we do? . . . We filed back to  
The bar: And Guss jest *looked* at us,  
And we looked back "The same as you,"  
Still *sayin'* nothin'—And the sap  
It stood in every eye,  
And every hat and cap  
Went off, as we teched glasses solemnly,  
And Guss says-he:  
"Ef it's 'good-bye' with Tugg, fer *shore*,—I say  
God bless him!—Er ef they  
Ain't railly no *need* to pray,  
I'm not *reniggin'*—board's the play,  
And here's God bless him, anyway!"

VII

It must 'a' bin an hour er so  
We all set there,  
Talkin' o' pore  
Old Tugg, you know,  
'At never wuz ketched up before,—  
When—all slow-like—the door-  
Knob turned—and Tugg come shamblin' in,

TUGG MARTIN

Handcuffed!—’at’s what he wuz, I swear!—  
Yit smilin’, like he hadn’t bin  
Away at all! And when we ast him where  
The *Deputy* wuz at,—“I don’t know *where*,”  
Tugg said,—  
“All *I* know is—he’s dead.”

## LET US FORGET

LET us forget. What matters it that we  
Once reigned o'er happy realms of long ago,  
And talked of love, and let our voices low,  
And ruled for some brief sessions royally?  
What if we sung, or laughed, or wept maybe?  
It has availed not anything, and so  
Let it go by that we may better know  
How poor a thing is lost to you and me.  
But yesterday I kissed your lips, and yet  
Did thrill you not enough to shake the dew  
From your drenched lids—and missed, with no  
regret,  
Your kiss shot back, with sharp breaths failing  
you:  
And so, to-day, while our worn eyes are wet  
With all this waste of tears, let us forget!

## JOHN ALDEN AND PERCILLY

We got up a Christmas-doin's  
Last Christmas Eve—  
Kindo' dimonstration  
'At I railly believe  
Give more satisfaction—  
Take it up and down—  
Than airy intertainment  
Ever come to town!

Railly was a *theatre*—  
That's what it was,—  
But, bein' in the church, you know,  
We had a "*Santy Claus*"—  
So's to git the *old folks*  
To patternize, you see,  
And *back* the institootion up  
Kindo' *morally*.

JOHN ALDEN AND PERCILLY

School-teacher writ the thing—  
(Was a friend o' mine,)  
Got it out o' Longfeller's  
Pome "Evangeline"—  
Er somers—"bout the *Purituns.*—  
Anyway, the part  
"John Alden" fell to me—  
And learnt it all by heart!

Clairsty was "Percilly"—  
(School-teacher 'lowed  
Me and her could act them two  
Best of all the crowd)—  
Then—blame' ef he didn't  
Git her Pap, i jing!—  
To take the part o' "Santy Claus,"  
To wind up the thing.

Law! the fun o' practisun!—  
Was a week er two  
Me and Clairoy didn't have  
Nothin' else to do!—  
Kep' us jes a-meetin' round,  
Kindo' here and there,  
Ever' night rehearsin'-like,  
And gaddin' ever'where!

JOHN ALDEN AND PERCILLY

Game was wo'th the candle, though!—

Christmas Eve at last

Rolled around.—And 'tendance jes

Couldn't been su'passed!—

Neighbers from the country

Come from Clay and Rush—

Yes, and 'crost the county-line

Clean from Puckerbrush!

Meetin'-house jes trimbled

As "Old Santy" went

Round amongst the childern,

With their peppermint

And sassafrac and wintergreen

Candy, and "a ball

O' pop-corn," the preacher 'nounced,

"Free fer each and all!"

School-teacher suddenly

Whispered in my ear,—

"Guess I got you:—*Christmas-gift!*—

*Christmas is here!*"

I give him a gold pen,

And case to hold the thing.—

And Clairy whispered, "*Christmas-gift!*"

And I give her a ring.

JOHN ALDEN AND PERCILLY

"And now," says I, "jes watch *me*—  
Christmas-gift," says I,  
"I'm a-goin' to git one—  
‘Santy's’ comin' by!"—  
Then I rech' and grabbed him:  
And, as you'll infer,  
'Course I got the old man's,  
And *he* gimme *her*!

## REACH YOUR HAND TO ME

REACH your hand to me, my friend,  
With its heartiest caress—  
Sometime there will come an end  
To its present faithfulness—  
    Sometime I may ask in vain  
    For the touch of it again,  
    When between us land or sea  
    Holds it ever back from me.

Sometime I may need it so,  
Groping somewhere in the night,  
It will seem to me as though  
Just a touch, however light,  
    Would make all the darkness day,  
    And along some sunny way  
    Lead me through an April-shower  
    Of my tears to this fair hour.

REACH YOUR HAND TO ME

O the present is too sweet  
To go on forever thus!  
Round the corner of the street  
Who can say what waits for us?—  
Meeting—greeting, night and day,  
Faring each the selfsame way—  
Still somewhere the path must end.—  
Reach your hand to me, my friend!

## THE ROSE

It tossed its head at the wooing breeze;  
And the sun, like a bashful swain,  
Beamed on it through the waving trees  
With a passion all in vain,—  
For my rose laughed in a crimson glee,  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

The honey-bee came there to sing  
His love through the languid hours,  
And vaunt of his hives, as a proud old king  
Might boast of his palace-towers:  
But my rose bowed in a mockery,  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

The humming-bird, like a courtier gay,  
Dipped down with a dalliant song,  
And twanged his wings through the roundelay  
Of love the whole day long:  
Yet my rose turned from his minstrelsy  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

## THE ROSE

The firefly came in the twilight dim  
    My red, red rose to woo—  
Till quenched was the flame of love in him,  
    And the light of his lantern too,  
As my rose wept with dewdrops three  
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.

And I said: I will cull my own sweet rose—  
    Some day I will claim as mine  
The priceless worth of the flower that knows  
    No change, but a bloom divine—  
The bloom of a fadeless constancy  
That hides in the leaves in wait for me!

But time passed by in a strange disguise,  
    And I marked it not, but lay  
In a lazy dream, with drowsy eyes,  
    Till the summer slipped away,  
And a chill wind sang in a minor key:  
“Where is the rose that waits for thee?”

. . . . .

I dream to-day, o'er a purple stain  
    Of bloom on a withered stalk,  
Pelted down by the autumn rain  
    In the dust of the garden-walk,  
That an Angel-rose in the world to be  
Will hide in the leaves in wait for me.

## MY FRIEND

“HE is my friend,” I said,—  
“Be patient!” Overhead  
The skies were drear and dim;  
And lo! the thought of him  
Smiled on my heart—and then  
The sun shone out again!

“He is my friend!” The words  
Brought summer and the birds;  
And all my winter-time  
Thawed into running rhyme  
And rippled into song,  
Warm, tender, brave, and strong.

And so it sings to-day.—  
So may it sing alway!  
Though waving grasses grow  
Between, and lilies blow  
Their trills of perfume clear  
As laughter to the ear,  
Let each mute measure end  
With “Still he is thy friend.”

## SUSPENSE

A WOMAN'S figure, on a ground of night  
Inlaid with sallow stars that dimly stare  
Down in the lonesome eyes, uplifted there  
As in vague hope some alien lance of light  
Might pierce their woe. The tears that blind her  
sight—

The salt and bitter blood of her despair—  
Her hands toss back through torrents of her hair  
And grip toward God with anguish infinite.

And O the carven mouth, with all its great  
Intensity of longing frozen fast

In such a smile as well may designate  
The slowly murdered heart, that, to the last,  
Conceals each newer wound, and back at Fate  
Throbs Love's eternal lie—"Lo, I can wait!"

## THE PASSING OF A HEART

O touch me with your hands—

For pity's sake!

My brow throbs ever on with such an ache

As only your cool touch may take away;

And so, I pray

You, touch me with your hands!

Touch—touch me with your hands.—

Smooth back the hair

You once caressed, and kissed, and called so fair

That I did dream its gold would wear alway,

And lo, to-day—

O touch me with your hands!

Just touch me with your hands,

And let them press

My weary eyelids with the old caress,

And lull me till I sleep. Then go your way,

That Death may say:

He touched her with his hands.

## BY HER WHITE BED

By her white bed I muse a little space:  
She fell asleep—not very long ago,—  
And yet the grass was here and not the snow—  
The leaf, the bud, the blossom, and—her face!—  
Midsummer's heaven above us, and the grace  
Of Love's own day, from dawn to afterglow;  
The fireflies' glimmering, and the sweet and low  
Plaint of the whippoorwills, and every place  
In thicker twilight for the roses' scent.  
Then *night*.—She slept—in such tranquillity,  
I walk atiptoe still, nor *dare* to weep,  
Feeling, in all this hush, she rests content—  
That though God stood to wake her for me, she  
Would mutely plead: “Nay, Lord! Let *him* so  
sleep.”

## NEVER TALK BACK

NEVER talk back! sich things is repperhensible;  
A feller only hurts hisse'f that jaws a man that's hot;  
In a quarrel, ef you'll only keep your mouth shet and  
act sensible,  
The man that does the talkin' 'll git worsted every  
shot!

Never talk back to a feller that's abusin' you—  
Jest let him carry on, and rip, and snort, and swear;  
And when he finds his blamin' and defamin' 's jest  
amusin' you,  
You've got him clean kaflummixed,—and you want  
to hold him there!

Never talk back, and wake up the whole community  
And call a man a liar, over Law, er Politics.—  
You can lift and land him furder and with gracefuller  
impunity  
With one good jolt of silence than a half a dozen  
kicks!

## **MR. WHAT'S-HIS-NAME**

**THEY** called him Mr. What's-his-name:  
From where he was, or why he came,  
Or when, or what he found to do,  
Nobody in the city knew.

He lived, it seemed, shut up alone  
In a low hovel of his own;  
There cooked his meals and made his bed,  
Careless of all his neighbors said.

His neighbors, too, said many things  
Expressive of grave wonderings,  
Since none of them had ever been  
Within his doors, or peered therein.

In fact, grown watchful, they became  
Assured that Mr. What's-his-name  
Was up to something wrong—indeed,  
Small doubt of it, we all agreed.

MR. WHAT'S-HIS-NAME

At night were heard strange noises there,  
When honest people everywhere  
Had long retired; and his light  
Was often seen to burn all night.

He left his house but seldom—then  
Would always hurry back again,  
As though he feared some stranger's knock,  
Finding him gone, might burst the lock.

Besides, he carried, every day,  
At the one hour he went away,  
A basket, with the contents hid  
Beneath its woven willow lid.

And so we grew to greatly blame  
This wary Mr. What's-his-name,  
And look on him with such distrust  
His actions seemed to sanction just.

But when he died—he died one day—  
Dropped in the street while on his way  
To that old wretched hut of his—  
You'll think it strange—perhaps it is—

But when we lifted him, and past  
The threshold of his home at last,

### MR. WHAT'S-HIS-NAME

No man of all the crowd but stepped  
With reverence,—ay, *quailed* and *wept!*

What was it? Just a shriek of pain  
I pray to never hear again—  
A withered woman, old and bowed,  
That fell and crawled and cried aloud—

And kissed the dead man's matted hair—  
Lifted his face and kissed him there—  
Called to him, as she clutched his hand,  
In words no one could understand.

Insane? Yes.—Well, we, searching, found  
An unsigned letter, in a round  
Free hand, within the dead man's breast:  
“Look to my mother—I'm at rest.

“You'll find my money safely hid  
Under the lining of the lid  
Of my work-basket. It is hers,  
And God will bless her ministers!”

And some day—though he died unknown—  
If through the City by the Throne  
I walk, all cleansed of earthly shame,  
I'll ask for Mr. What's-his-name.

## WHEN AGE COMES ON

WHEN Age comes on!—  
The deepening dusk is where the dawn  
    Once glittered splendid, and the dew,  
In honey-drips from red rose-lips,  
    Was kissed away by me and you.—  
And now across the frosty lawn  
Black footprints trail, and Age comes on—  
    And Age comes on!  
    And biting wild-winds whistle through  
Our tattered hopes—and Age comes on!

When Age comes on!—  
O tide of raptures, long withdrawn,  
    Flow back in summer floods, and fling  
Here at our feet our childhood sweet,  
    And all the songs we used to sing! . . .  
Old loves, old friends—all dead and gone—  
Our old faith lost—and Age comes on—  
    And Age comes on!  
    Poor hearts! have we not anything  
But longings left when Age comes on?

## ENVOY

JUST as of old! The world rolls on and on;  
The day dies into night—night into dawn—  
Dawn into dusk—through centuries untold.—

Just as of old.

Time loiters not. The river ever flows,  
Its brink or white with blossoms or with snows;  
Its tide or warm with spring or winter cold:

Just as of old.

Lo! where is the beginning, where the end  
Of living, loving, longing? *Listen*, friend!—  
God answers with a silence of pure gold—

Just as of old.





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